

Big quake in Japan kills two

TOKYO (AFP) — A major earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale hit northern Japan on Wednesday killing at least two people and injuring scores. Roads were closed and trains stopped, while several small tidal waves hit the coast, reports said. The two dead were in Hachinohe, in northeast of the main Honshu island, where the quake was most strongly felt. The floor of a pinball parlor in the town 500 kilometres north of Tokyo, collapsed injuring eight people, Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) said. More than 85 other people were treated in city hospitals for cuts and burns, NHK said. A quake of 7.5 on the Richter scale can cause heavy, widespread damage, according to experts. Wednesday's tremor, which occurred at 9:19 p.m. (1219 GMT), registered six on the Japan scale of intensity ranging from one to seven. Six could damage many wooden structure homes, cause serious landslides and leave cracks in concrete, according to experts. The quake registered five in Morioka, Aomori and Mutsu.

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Battle for Grozny on

GROZNY (Agencies) — The Russian army launched a concerted attack on the Chechen capital Grozny from three directions on Wednesday after bloody bombing raids that destroyed an orphanage.

The Russians, using helicopter gunships, warplanes, tanks and Grad rockets, assaulted the Khankala suburbs in eastern Grozny and the strategic Karpinski hill in the west of the republic's capital just before dawn.

The storming of Grozny has begun. They want to take the city, but they won't, said Chechen government spokesman Movladi Udugov at the heavily guarded presidential building.

The attack was the first in the Grozny suburbs since President Boris Yeltsin sent troops on Dec. 11 to crush the republic's three-year independence drive.

A Russian division advanced three kilometres from the east and was fighting with Chechen forces around the former military airport in Khankala, about five kilometres east of central Grozny, said Shamil Besayev, commander at the Khankala front.

But the Chechen line was holding and the 10,000-man Russian force was unable to move, harassed by Chechens on all sides, he said. "They won't come through tonight," he said as multiple Grad rockets roared over and crashed into nearby positions, sending up plumes of black smoke.

A member of Russia's influential security council said that Moscow's troops would gradually drive rebel fighters out of Grozny but denied the city would be stormed.

Grozny will be freed from illegal armed forces, mercenaries and criminals. It will not be stormed, but it will be liberated," security council secretary Oleg Lobov told a news conference. "The liberation of Grozny will be carried out step by step, dis-

tributed by district." Mr. Lobov did not say whether troops would actually enter Grozny or use other means to drive forces loyal to Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Russian officials previously said the armed forces would blockade the city from the north, east and west while leaving roads to the south open.

Mr. Lobov said Russian troops had taken the key military airfield at Khankala, just six kilometres southwest of Grozny.

The Chechens, camouflaged in white against the snow, seemed in high spirits and operated in small groups of about 12.

All were armed with anti-tank rocket propelled grenades, which could cause havoc among the Russian armour if it advanced another kilometre into the streets of the suburb.

One group darting through deserted houses in the front-line shouted "Allahu Akbar" before disappearing.

Helicopters, the thunder of tanks and small arms could be heard continuously over the battle zone. The air stank with the smell of burning and explosions.

Two Chechen tanks and anti-aircraft guns mounted on armoured cars swung around from one end of the frontline to the other, highlighting the Chechens' lack of heavy weaponry.

"All the Russians use snipers and tanks. We can only fight infantry," said 31-year-old Chechen soldier, Russian Abalelov.

Explosions of heavy guns and rockets could also be heard in the west of the city near Karpinski hill, which was still in Chechen hands, the government said. This could not be immediately confirmed.

The hill, about five kilometres from the centre, would give Russian gunners a

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REGENT VISITS WIHDA: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Wednesday visits Al Wihdat for a first-hand review of the living conditions of the residents of the area (see page 3) (Petra photo)

Fahd, Assad and Mubarak meet upon Syria's behest

ALEXANDRIA (AFP) — Arab leaders on Wednesday held a mini-summit here amid pressure from Syria to close ranks and stop Israel exploiting divisions among Arab countries in the Middle East peace process.

Presidents Hafez Al Assad and Hosni Mubarak of Syria and Egypt met with Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, said Egyptian Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif.

The issues under discussion included the eventual return of Iraq to the Arab fold, four years after it was ousted by Kuwait in August 1990, a Syrian source said.

Damascus wants "an inter-Arab reconciliation because maintaining the status quo with Iraq weakens the Arabs," a member of the Syrian delegation said, asking not to be named.

"That's why it wanted the summit to be held as soon as

possible in Alexandria," he added.

The three leaders were due to spend the night in the Mediterranean port city after a working dinner and the talks could continue on Thursday, security services said.

Mr. Sherif said the summit was aimed at "coordination of efforts to clear the atmosphere and create Arab solidarity."

A member of the Syrian delegation said the meeting was to push for "a more solid Arab Nation."

The talks took place just two days after Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin travelled to Oman, becoming the Jewish state's first head of government to visit a Gulf Arab state.

"Syria feels that if the Arab World closes ranks it will be in a strong position in talks with Israel, whereas at the moment it is everyone for

themselves," a Western diplomat in Cairo told AFP.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid was also invited to take part in the summit, which has not been the case in previous talks between Arab leaders.

A European diplomat in Cairo said the mini-summit reflected Arab concern over Mr. Rabin's Muscat visit. "The meeting looks like a rejection front. Mr. Rabin's visit to Oman has scared them," he said.

In Riyadh, a Saudi official said Mr. Assad himself called for the meeting to complain that Arab countries were moving too fast towards normalisation with Israel.

"Syria is unhappy with the normalisation process between Israel and several Arab countries at a time when there is no progress in

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Israel continues settlement work despite protests

EL KHADER, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Construction workers pressed on with a project to expand a settlement near Bethlehem on the occupied West Bank Wednesday despite Palestinian protests and a government review.

A government spokesman said Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had informed Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat that "the government would discuss the suspension" of work at Ephrat when it met Monday.

An announcement over Israel Radio that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had ordered the suspension of work resulted from a "confusion," the spokesman said.

The project could not be stopped immediately because it was privately financed and taking place on land which had been allocated to the settlement, the spokesman added.

Behira Berdugo, adviser to Mr. Peres, said he told Mr. Arafat the bulldozers would stop building until the Israeli cabinet could reconsider the matter early next week.

Israel crews went on bulldozing the land for the settlement on a hill near Bethlehem between the Palestinian village of El Khader and

the settlement. On Tuesday, Israeli soldiers and police forcibly removed protesters from the land. Palestinians view as a provocation the more than 100,000 Jews living in settlements scattered among the 1.2 million Palestinians of the West Bank.

Four bulldozers, two of them equipped with giant pneumatic drills, flattened the stony ground on a hill five kilometres south of Bethlehem Wednesday ahead of the construction of 500 new settler homes.

The Palestinians have warned the expansion of the settlement could wreck the negotiations on extending self-rule on the West Bank.

Some 300 Palestinians and leftwing Israelis demonstrated at the site Wednesday. "We are not fighting against the Jews but against the Israeli government, which promises us peace on the one hand, but on the other presses on with settlements," said Naim Abu Suwai, aged 60.

"We'll stay here until they stop," vowed Mustapha Imran, 45, a supporter of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, who has slept rough next to the site for six

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Royal Falcons pilot dies in crash

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Bilal Abdul Hamid Shreideh, a pilot of the Royal Falcons, Jordan's national aerobatics team, died in a plane crash at Marka airport while practising on Wednesday.

A statement released by the Armed Forces to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the plane crashed at approximately 1 p.m.

According to an eyewitness, "the plane just dove to the ground."

"The manoeuvring needs a certain height to overshoot, but he (the pilot) went below the height and could not recover and crashed," the eyewitness told the Jordan Times.

The eyewitness said the lightweight single-seat EXTRA-300 plane fell 50 metres from the civil defence units based at the airport and was engulfed by fire.

"It took less than five minutes to put out the fire, but Captain Shreideh was burnt beyond recognition," the witness added.

Another eyewitness who was sitting in one of the offices at the airport at the time of the crash said that he heard a plane zooming in the area, and "all of a sudden I heard a loud explosion."

"When I went to check, I saw a ball of flames beside one of the airport hangars," the witness said.

The witness added that the only part that was left from the crash was the plane's vertical stabiliser, and everything else was tangled together in one metal ball.

Airport sources said that the cause of the crash was under investigation and that a team will be formed to investigate the incident.

Experts describe the EXTRA-300 as a superb aircraft suited to the intricate manoeuvring demands of world-class aerobatics.

Capt. Shreideh served as an airforce pilot before joining the Royal Falcons.

Capt. Shreideh, who was 29, is survived by his wife and a new-born daughter.

It was the second reported disaster involving the Royal Falcons. On July 12, 1992, two Royal Falcons pilots were killed in a plane crash during an air show in Amman. The two pilots were Sherif Rakan Ghazi and teammate pilot Mohammad Oudeh.

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France probes whether hijackers had help

PARIS (Agencies) — French authorities on Wednesday began investigating whether Algerians who hijacked a plane in Algiers over Christmas had accomplices in France.

The Paris public prosecutor's office started legal action against "persons unknown" for complicity in the hijacking, justice sources said.

The four hijackers were killed when police stormed the Airbus 300 airliner in Marseille on Monday at the end of a 54-hour drama.

The opening of the legal file was entrusted to investigating Magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere, who has handled France's major anti-terrorism cases for the past decade, the sources said.

The legal move was not

automatic and was taken because authorities had indications, which they did not divulge, that there may have been accomplices to the hijacking.

The hijackers killed three passengers — a Vietnamese diplomat, a French embassy cook and an Algerian policeman — in Algeria before taking the plane to Marseille.

Unconfirmed reports said the plane was sent suspected that the hijackers, members of Algeria's radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA), may have had accomplices among the plane's passengers.

No-one claimed responsibility for the hijacking but the Algerian government blamed fundamentalists, who accuse Paris of supporting the military-backed government

in Algiers.

French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua said on Tuesday he did not believe there were accomplices aboard. The legal move gave no indication whether possible accomplices were on the aircraft or on the ground in France.

Pressure for tighter security, specifically on transport links with Algeria, a former French colony, was fuelled in particular by the slaying of three French priests, as well as a Belgian, in Algeria on Tuesday, within 24 hours of the end of the hijack drama (see page 12).

The GIA claimed responsibility for the killings.

The GIA said in a statement faxed to news organisations that the priests died as part of a campaign of "annihilation and physical liquidation of Christian crusaders."

The group, which has emerged as one of Algeria's most hardline Muslim fundamentalist factions, said the priests were killed after four of its own "soldiers" died in the hijack.

The four were members of the same unit that killed the priests, it added.

The Airbus hijack marked the first time the civil war in Algeria, a former colony of France, had crossed over onto the French mainland, and Paris is concerned that it should not set a precedent.

French nationals, interests and institutions have for more than two years been targeted in Algeria by Muslim fundamentalist groups who accuse Paris of supporting the Algerian regime.

On Wednesday air and sea links were still suspended between France and Algeria, and Transport Minister Bernard Bosson was considering what extra security measures could be implemented before they were allowed to resume.

These could include allowing armed guards to be deployed on all flights to Algeria, as well as a ban on overnight stops by French planes in the country and tightened controls on airline staff, Mr. Bosson said.

On the French mainland as well, authorities, led by hardline Interior Minister Pasqua, were considering what preventive measures could be taken to forestall any terrorist attack.

On Tuesday it was reported that the Ministry of the Interior is, in fact, working on its own proposals to amend the election law. Others have contended that questions pertaining to property ownership will be used for purposes of taxation.

Dr. Abdul Aziz Zoubi, executive director for the 1994 population census said, however, that there was no political motivation, or any other sort of motivation in conducting the census other than to establish an accurate demographic picture of the Kingdom.

"It is important to study population growth, especially when it occurs drastically over short periods of time as it has in Jordan," he said.

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Census shows 4.095m people live in Jordan

By Amy Henderson

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Preliminary results of Jordan's 1994 census show that 4,095,579 people are living in the Kingdom — 1,779,118 of them Jordanians, according to the Department of Statistics (the remaining 2,316,461 are foreigners in the Kingdom. However, they have not yet been categorised).

The preliminary results released by the department late Tuesday broke down the population by governorate and sex. According to the department, there are 1,917,601 male and 1,861,517 female Jordanians. Statistics also showed that family size has decreased since the last population census in 1979: Today's average Jordanian

members compared to 6.7 in 1979.

Officials also said that Jordan had seen a high population growth rate — 4.35 per cent — despite a drop in fertility rate, which they attribute to forced migration, particularly as a result of the Gulf crisis. Until now, it is estimated that 10 per cent of Jordan's population is comprised of returnees from the Gulf. Further census results should tell whether this is accurate.

These statistics were released Tuesday night via the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and sex. According to the department, there are 1,917,601 male and 1,861,517 female Jordanians. Statistics also showed that family size has decreased since the last population census in 1979: Today's average Jordanian

Department officials said they did not know exactly the reasons for calling off the conference.

Preliminary results, however, are not the statistics that pique the interest of most Jordanians. Other figures yet to be released and interpreted are what most are waiting for.

The census questionnaire has caused more than a few raised eyebrows: especially those questions concerning family origin, refugee status and displaced persons status, all of which have not yet been publicised.

The census has been criticised by some in the press and public as a politically motivated census that would categorise the population in terms of Jordanians and Palestinians. As of late, any

nian, who is a Palestinian and what exactly constitutes a refugee has been taboo. The government has maintained throughout the years that less than 40 per cent of Jordan's population is of Palestinian origin, while most are inclined to believe that this figure may be unrepresentative of the actual number of Jordanians of Palestinian origin in Jordan.

Other theories have abounded as well concerning the census' purpose. Some have proposed that the census statistics would be useful in helping Jordan secure financial aid in further peace negotiations. One prominent Al Ra'i writer suggested that the results may be used in drafting a new election law or restricting the Kingdom for election purposes in a way he


equitable.

Government officials confirmed last week that the Ministry of the Interior is, in fact, working on its own proposals to amend the election law. Others have contended that questions pertaining to property ownership will be used for purposes of taxation.

Dr. Abdul Aziz Zoubi, executive director for the 1994 population census said, however, that there was no political motivation, or any other sort of motivation in conducting the census other than to establish an accurate demographic picture of the Kingdom.

"It is important to study population growth, especially when it occurs drastically over short periods of time as it has in Jordan," he said.

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CONGRATULATIONS ARAB BANK

Presents sincere congratulations
and best wishes to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

on the occasion of the
Prophetic Ascension.

May God grant your Majesty and the Arab
and Islamic nations further prosperity
and success in the years to come.

U.S.: Iraqi regime behind people's suffering

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Saddam Hussein is cynically manipulating the Iraqi people, systematically refusing to take advantage of the humanitarian options available under the United Nations sanctions, and blaming the U.N. for the people's suffering, a senior State Department official says.

Food and medicine are exempt from the U.N. sanctions regime, David Litt, director of the office of northern Gulf affairs pointed out. "There is no doubt the Iraqi people are suffering. But it is not due to the U.N."

Between January and August of this year, the U.N. Sanctions Committee approved the shipment of some \$2 billion worth of food and medical supplies to Iraq, Mr. Litt said. The committee, which is made up of Security Council members, is "very liberal" in approving humanitarian exports; food and medicine do not require U.N. approval at all, he noted.

The problem is not the Sanctions Committee, Mr. Litt stressed, but Saddam Hussein, "who has chosen to spend Iraq's money on such items as refurbishing palaces, crushing his internal opponents, and mobilizing troops to threaten the Kuwaiti border."

Apart from the humanitarian supplies which the Sanctions Committee oversees, Iraq has other options available to it, Mr. Litt said.

U.N. Security Council Resolutions 706 and 712 permit Iraq to sell up to \$1.6 billion worth of oil to purchase food, medicine and other humanitarian goods. Yet despite the option, "Iraq has chosen not to implement those resolutions," Mr. Litt said.

Yet a third means of obtaining humanitarian relief is available to Iraq: through the U.N. agencies and international non-governmental organizations. For example, Mr. Litt said, the U.N. has set up a \$200-\$300 million programme to carry out humanitarian projects there. However, since Iraq restricts U.N. and NGO access within the country, international donors are unwilling to fund projects there because they cannot ensure their donations will reach their intended destinations or intended beneficiaries.

As it is, the U.N., NGOs, and bilateral donors can carry on their programmes in an unrestricted manner only in the northern three governorates of the country, one of Baghdad's control, he said.

At the same time, the government has imposed an embargo of food and humanitarian supplies on much of northern Iraq and the southern marshlands. His actions have been "particularly abhorrent" in those regions, Mr. Litt said. Human rights violations there "occur on a broad scale" and many incidents of murder, torture and disappearances have been "very credibly" documented by the U.N. special rapporteur on Iraq.

In the past few years, the army has destroyed about 90 per cent of the southern marshlands, a region where marsh Arabs have survived for thousands of years. Of the 250,000 people who lived in the region in 1990, fewer than 50,000 remain today. Iraqi forces have drained the marshes "on a massive scale," Mr. Litt said, destroyed the grasses and trees, and moved Iraqi armour and artillery units in afterward to attack villages suspected of harbouring opponents. No international monitors or relief workers have been allowed in the region for years, he added.

In northern Iraq, the U.N. special rapporteur has found evidence that the genocide convention may have been violated, many tens of thousands of Kurds have fled and many more have disappeared. Middle East Watch, the international human rights organisation, calculates the number of Kurds who have disappeared at 70,000-100,000, Mr. Litt said.

Iraq has now complied with one aspect of one of the U.N. resolutions, formally recognising Kuwait's borders and sovereignty. However, Mr. Litt said, the U.N. requires the country to account for all the Kuwaitis and third country nationals missing in action since the Gulf War, as well as return the property looted and stolen at that time. These resolutions "of course, come in addition to dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction — its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programmes — and preventing their regeneration."



PALESTINIAN PROTEST: An old Palestinian sits on the land where Israeli bulldozers are waiting to start working at the hillside south of Bethlehem, where villagers from El Khader and Israel Peace Now activists are trying to prevent Israeli settlers from starting construction that will enlarge the Jewish settlement of Ephraim (see page one) (AFP photo)

Turkey bomb sale not decided — U.S.

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The U.S. State Department said Tuesday that it had not yet reached a decision on whether to license the proposed sale of cluster bombs to Turkey.

"No such decision has been made," David Johnson, a department spokesman, told reporters. He gave no indication when the matter might be decided.

Alliant Techsystems, headquartered in Hopkins, Minnesota, signed a contract with the Turkish Defence Ministry on June 21 to supply 493 CBU-87 cluster bombs to Turkey, according to the Human Rights Watch arms project.

The project, in a report being released Wednesday and in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, said it was deeply concerned that Turkey would use such cluster bombs indiscriminately in its conflict with Kurdish rebels, with "devastating effects on the civilian population."

Each CBU-87 can saturate an area the size of a football field with 202 small, indi-

vidual bomblets. The State Department must issue a license before such a sale can go forward.

In its letter to Mr. Christopher, Human Rights Watch also urged tighter controls on future U.S. arms transfers to Turkey. It wants to see written guarantees that the arms would be used "only in NATO contingencies or with the prior approval of the U.S. government."

Turkish forces have long been fighting Kurdish guerrillas in the eastern part of the country. Human Rights Watch accused the Turks of attacking Kurdish villages.

Wamik Tan, first secretary at the Turkish embassy, called the organization's statement an "absurd allegation" put forward to poison relations between the United States and Turkey.

"We do not use weapons for anything but NATO purposes," he said.

The State Department "should under no circumstances approve this license request," said the letter to Mr. Christopher.

"We are deeply concerned

that Turkey will use these cluster bombs indiscriminately in its conflict with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), with devastating effects on the civilian population."

"The Turkish government has a well-documented record of failing to discriminate between civilian and military targets," it continued. It accused Turkish forces of burning or deporting 1,400 towns and villages and using torture and terror against civilians in campaigns against the Kurdish insurgency and other domestic enemies.

Approval of the cluster bomb sale "would be particularly objectionable," at a time when Turkey's human rights record is deteriorating and its military campaign against the PKK is escalating, the letter said. It added that approval would undercut recent U.S. statements of concern about Turkish human rights problems including mistreatment of the Kurdish minority and the sentencing to prison of eight Kurdish members of parliament.

Rabbani's truce offer still in air

KABUL (AFP) — Rival factions have still to reply to the unilateral Kabul ceasefire offered by forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, an official spokesman said Wednesday.

"No clear and official agreement regarding a ceasefire has been received from the other side yet," said a Defence Ministry spokesman.

He said a special delegation had been assigned for talks with all the opposition factions, to discuss the delicate question of the transfer of power from Mr. Rabbani to an interim governing body.

"We are now waiting to see what the United Nations is going to do," he said, as head of UNAMA, a mission for Afghanistan, Mahmoud Mesiri arrived in Kabul to resume his peace efforts.

"It is time for them to cease looking from the sidelines and get into direct contact with the people of Kabul," he said.

A Foreign Ministry official said Mr. Mesiri, who reached Islamabad Tuesday, was expected to travel to Kabul.

He said Mr. Mesiri might meet opposition leader Hezbi-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the capital Jalalabad, before coming to Kabul to see Mr. Rabbani.

A permanent ceasefire was declared unilaterally Tuesday by pro-Rabbani forces, and although there were no major clashes Wednesday skirmishing was witnessed along the south Kabul frontlines.

"We have received orders not to shoot unless we are severely harassed by the enemy's fire," a pro-Rabbani frontline commander told AFP.

Behind south Kabul's Dehrazang Square two mortar bombs fired by rival factions were seen exploding in the deserted residential blocks and there was a brisk exchange of light and heavy weapons fire.

Civilian traffic to the south Kabul areas controlled by Mr. Rabbani's rival Hezbi-Wahdat Shiite faction was not interrupted by the shooting.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fateh attacks PFLP in Lebanon camp

SIDON (AFP) — Militants from Yasser Arafat's Fatah group attacked members of the rival Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) late Tuesday killing two persons and wounding another. Palestinian sources reported. There was no immediate reason for the attack, which occurred in the 'Ain Al Hilweh camp on the eastern outskirts of the southern port of Sidon in South Lebanon. But a key Arafat opponent in the camp, Munir Maqdash, blamed "Israeli agents" for the attack. According to Palestinian sources, a group of Fateh militants hurled a rocket-propelled grenade and unleashed several rounds of gunfire at a PFLP office killing one of its occupants and wounding another. Earlier this month the PFLP and another Damascus-based group, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), announced a decision to merge their military leadership. Both groups are staunchly opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace process and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) self-rule accord with the Jewish state. Six people were killed and 13 others wounded in inter-Palestinian fighting last month in 'Ain Al Hilweh, the largest of 11 Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. After the fighting Mr. Arafat appointed a new Fateh leadership in Lebanon aimed at preventing further bloodshed.

Ancient falcon cemetery found in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian archaeologists have found hundreds of mummified falcons buried ritually at a cemetery in the eastern Nile delta in the first millennium B.C. Ali Hassan, director of excavations at the Supreme Antiquities Council, said the cemetery was at Tel Abu Yassin, about 20 kilometres from the town of Zagazig and an important burial place in the 4th and 5th centuries B.C. Cemeteries for mummified falcons are known from the western delta and near the southern town of Edfu, centre of the cult of the falcon god Horus, but the new one is an area better known for the worship of sacred bulls. Ancient Egyptian priests kept some of the animals associated with their god and gave them a ritual mummification when they died. Apart from those for falcons, Egypt has cemeteries for mummified bulls, cats, ibises, baboons and crocodiles. The government newspaper Al-Ahram said the falcon burials were of at least two types — in limestone sarcophagi by the rich, or loosed on shelves by the middle classes and the poor. The rich also preserved falcon eggs in earthenware vessels placed close to the sarcophagi, it added.

Iraqis, Syrians arrested in furniture truck

WARSAW (AFP) — Seventeen Iraqi and Syrian nationals were arrested after they were found hidden in a truck travelling from the Belarus capital Minsk to Sweden, police said. The illegal immigrants were found Sunday at the Polish frontier post of Kukuryki, hidden behind furniture carried in the truck which police decided to search after observing that its load had been tampered with. The driver, of unspecified nationality, and his two Swedish assistants were arrested, and the illegal immigrants sent back into Belarus, police said. An official report by the Polish Labour Ministry Tuesday said between 100,000 and 150,000 immigrants, mostly from Russia, Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine, were working illegally in Poland.

Turkey asks Bonn to probe immigrant deaths

BONN (R) — Turkey formally asked Germany on Tuesday to investigate whether a recent fire that killed a Turkish national and his son was started by right-wing extremists. A Turkish embassy spokesman in Bonn said the mission had made the request in a diplomatic note to the Bonn government after the blaze, which police have described as accidental. "The German government is asked to investigate the case because in the past 64 per cent of arson cases were attributed to attackers who remained unknown," the spokesman told reporters. "The German government was also asked to prevent the recurrence of similar cases," he added. No comment was immediately available from the German Foreign Ministry. The spokesman gave no explanation of why Turkey suspected right-wing extremists. Turks and other foreigners have been frequent victims of neo-Nazi violence that has killed at least 30 people since 1990.

Iran report cites malnutrition, overeating

TEHRAN (R) — Malnutrition and the growth of obesity in Iranian children under five while 20 per cent of the population face health hazards because they eat too much, according to a report published on Tuesday. Iran's Centre for Agricultural Studies and Economic Planning said the country's per capita food consumption was in line with international standards but distribution was lopsided. "Twenty-five per cent of children under five suffer from slow growth and their bodies are smaller than normal for their age," the centre said in its report quoted in Kat Va Kargar newspaper. "Twenty per cent of the people do not have access to enough food according to the standards of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation. Forty per cent eat more than they need and the health of 20 per cent is seriously threatened because of overeating," it said.

Ambassador reported due on hijacked flight

PARIS (R) — France's ambassador to Algiers had been due to travel on the Ait France flight to Paris which was hijacked, the French weekly Le Canard Enchaîné said. The weekly said Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian was booked on Saturday's flight but decided to bring forward his trip by 48 hours. France has said two other embassy staff were on the flight. One of them, Erik Yannick Beniguet, was shot dead by the hijackers. The 54-hour hijack, which started at Algiers airport, ended on Monday when French commandos stormed the plane, killing the hijackers and saving the lives of the 169 remaining hostages.

Afghan nightmare still haunts Russians

style syndrome in Russian minds. A constant reminder is the sight of war veterans, disabled, their wounds, streets begging.

The armed forces, the situation has gone from bad to worse. After their retreat from Afghanistan, the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989 followed by the emancipation of the "fraternal" states of the Soviet bloc and then the breakup of the Soviet Union itself in 1991.

Next came the political crisis of late 1993, when the military hesitated a long time before siding with President Boris Yeltsin against rebellious members of parliament. The shock waves from all those cataclysms are still being felt.

The pull-out from central and eastern Europe, completed this year, saw troops come back to Russia in degrading conditions, without decent lodging available for them.

Accusations of corruption have been raining

down on superior officers, while the Defence Ministry has to fight inch by inch to ward off hefty cuts in its budget. The ministry wants 11,000 billion rubles (\$32 billion) next year, but the 1995 draft budget is offering 4,500 billion rubles (\$13 billion).

In this context of extreme financial austerity, the Afghan precedent is arousing worries about the cost of the Chechnya military intervention.

Past experience of such operations showed that "they call for the spending of enormous sums, which Russia is incapable of bearing for long," warned Alexander Piskunov, deputy chairman of the duma's (lower house of parliament) defence committee.

Silence was the order of the day in all ranks during the decade of the Afghan involvement. It was only at the end of 1989 that the army paper Krasnaya Zvezda printed the results of an

inquiry showing that the military general staff had opposed the despatch of troops to Afghanistan. This time round, however, officers are resigning or even openly refusing to obey orders.

No less a respected figure than General Boris Gromov has spoken out. He supervised the retreat from Afghanistan and was the last soldier to cross the border on February 15, 1989. Now, as deputy defence minister, he has complained about the "deceit" practised on the troops sent to Chechnya.

The forces actually fighting on the ground there are from the Interior Ministry at the moment, the regular army being much more reluctant. An exception is the air force, which has been killing dozens of civilians in bombing raids on the capital Grozny.

With all due respect to Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, another Afghan

veteran who is firmly among the hardliners on the Chechen issue, the Afghan nightmare still haunts the military.

By constantly denouncing the presence of Afghan mujahidees alongside Chechen forces, the government here is exacerbating those searing memories, while the Muslim Chechens are clearly delighted to brandish the spectre.

"Afghanistan destroyed the Soviet Union. Chechnya will destroy the Russian federation!" instead Chechen Deputy President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

"After a long series of defeats and humiliations, which began in Afghanistan, the Russian army has reached a point where it might quite simply refuse to obey orders," warned Pavel Felgenhauer, a respected military analyst with the liberal newspaper Sevodnia.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Dipoldo
17:30 Tulsam/Magazine
18:00 Musique Sans Frontiers
18:30 News in French
19:00 Home Improvement
19:30 Quantum Leap
20:30 Law and Order
21:00 News in English
22:00 Prison
22:40 Coming of Age

PRAYER TIMES
8:00 Fair
9:00 (Sunrise) Dubai
11:30 Dhuhr
14:21 'Asr
16:44 Maghreb
18:07 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swatfield, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
St. De Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622566
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
American Church Tel. 630851, Tel.

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
The weather will be partly cloudy to cloudy with expected showers of rain. Winds will be southwesterly moderate to active. In Amman, it is going to be partly cloudy with scattered rains and winds will be southerly active and seas choppy.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 6 / 13
Aqaba 11 / 20
Deserts 4-15
Jordan Valley 9 / 19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 49 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790286
Dr. Jamal Jbarah 847351
Dr. Walid Al Masri 675485
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070
First pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 778336
Al Azzam pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Hila 279773
Aqaba pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Ghassan Al Faqih 906130
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Food Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81831/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) flights
(Terminal 1)
6:40 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
6:50 Aden (RJ)
6:55 Sana'a (RJ)
6:55 Amman (RJ)
6:55 Agaba (RJ)
6:55 New Delhi (RJ)
6:55 Athens (RJ)
6:55 London (RJ)
6:55 Cairo (RJ)
6:55 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
6:55 Paris (RJ)
6:55 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
6:55 Jeddah (RJ)
6:55 Singapore (add) (RJ)
6:55 Pula, Medan (RJ)
6:55 Jakarta (RJ)

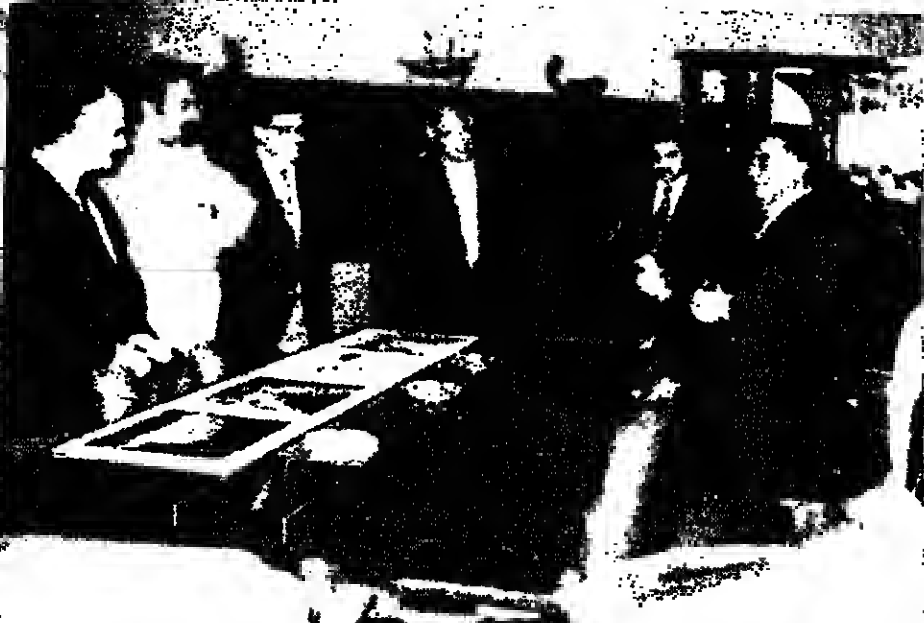
DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) flights
(Terminal 1)
6:40 Beirut (RJ)
6:50 Agaba (RJ)
6:50 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
6:50 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
6:50 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
6:50 Rome (RJ)
6:50 Athens (RJ)
6:50 London (RJ)
6:50 Cairo (RJ)
6:50 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
6:50 Paris (RJ)
6:50 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
6:50 Jeddah (RJ)
6:50 Singapore (add) (RJ)
6:50 Pula, Medan (RJ)
6:50 Jakarta (RJ)

MARKET PRICES
Upper market prices in Jds per kg
Apple 100
Banana 80
Banana (Mukhammar) 80
Cabbage 100
Carrot 100
Cauliflower 100
Clementine 100
Cucumber (large) 100
Cucumber (small) 100
Eggplant 100
Garlic 100
Onion 100
Potato 100
Pumpkin 100
Spinach 100
Tomato 100
Zucchini 100

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Tomato 100
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Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Wednesday listens to a briefing by Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi (right) (Petra photo)

Regent directs authorities to speed up urban projects

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Wednesday instructed the concerned authorities to start implementing 14 urban development projects (11 in the Amman Governorate and the rest in Zarqa) immediately. Speaking during a tour of several districts within the Amman area, the Regent said that the concerned authorities should highlight the urban dimension in the process of designing municipal and urban development schemes, taking care to integrate human heritage with the country's history and modern requirements. Stressing the need to preserve the architectural style of Amman, the Regent said special attention should be



Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan Wednesday distributes diplomas to students of the Madaba Mosaic School (Petra photo)

Second group of mosaic restorers graduates from Madaba school

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of students Wednesday received diplomas from Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan upon completion of a three-month training course on restoring and renovating mosaics. The graduation ceremony, held at the Madaba Mosaic School, was attended by Italian Ambassador to Jordan, Romano Bertini, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Director in Jordan William Oliver. In an address to the gathering, Dr. Adwan noted that the art of mosaics was developed in this area many centuries ago and has been reintroduced and revived

NEWS IN BRIEF

King, Regent condole Indian President

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein, the King's advisor Mohammad Rasoul Kilani Wednesday visited the Indian embassy in Amman to offer condolences over the death of former Indian President Giani Zail Singh who passed away Sunday. Also Wednesday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, sent a cable to Indian President Shanker Dayal Sharma condoling him over the death of Mr. Singh. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali also delegated the director of his office Akham Qusous to visit the Indian embassy to offer condolences.

Regent congratulates Nepal

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday sent a cable to King Birendra Bir Bikram

Shah Dev of Nepal to congratulate him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on his country's national day. Prince Hassan wished King Birendra good health and happiness and the Nepalese people further progress and prosperity.

Malaysia, Jordan conclude civil aviation talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Malaysia Wednesday concluded talks in Amman on enhancing bilateral relations in civil aviation and air transport. The two sides decided at the meeting, which was co-chaired by Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Director General Ahmad Jweihir and Malaysian Transport Minister Wan Yacoub, to organise technical cooperation between Jordan and Malaysia and to increase the number of flights by Royal Jordanian (RJ) to and from Kuala Lumpur to three flights a week. The Malaysian delegation, headed by Mr. Yacoub, arrived in Amman Monday on a several-day visit.

Industrialists to renew Iraqi contacts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A delegation of Jordanian industrialists will visit Iraq in early January to renew contacts and seek to boost Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation in industry, an official of the Amman Chamber of Industry said Wednesday. The visit will be the latest in ongoing exchanges between Iraqi and Jordanian businessmen as signs are emerging in the international scene of a possible relaxation of the United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. A team of Jordanian importers and exporters paid a visit to Iraq in November under the umbrella of the Jordan Businessmen's Association (JBA) and held talks with senior Iraqi trade and industry officials as well as the Iraqi private sector. Businessmen described that visit as highly fruitful and

said contacts launched by the JBA delegation members were being followed up and translated into increased Jordanian exports of foodstuffs and medicine, which are exempt from the sanctions. They also said that the visit also paved the way for enhanced trade links between Jordanian and Iraqi private sectors in goods and services as and when the United Nations Security Council decides to relax the embargo on Iraq. Waleed Al Khatib, director-general of the Chamber of Industry, said the delegation which would visit Iraq Jan. 2-7 would have about 50 members, including businessmen as well as representatives of the chamber. The delegation, which will be headed by the president of the chamber, Khalidoun Abu Hassan, will include manufacturers of foodstuffs and medicine as well as other products with a view to pre-



Khalidoun Abu Hassan

paring the ground for increased Jordanian exports to Iraq. Mr. Khatib said the delegation's visit was in response to invitations extended by the Iraqi Federation of Industries and Chambers of Commerce and Industry. "The team would hold talks with senior Iraqi gov-

ernment officials as well as the private sector and explore means to enhance cooperation and business relations," Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times. Jordanian businessmen hope that the visit, which comes amid a flurry of contacts between Iraqi and non-Arab businessmen, mostly from Europe and the Far East, would contribute to reaffirming Jordanian-Iraqi trade and industrial cooperation after a period of stagnation. Many businessmen who held themselves back because of government constraints on trade links in goods not exempt from the sanctions and a cumbersome process of banking procedures while dealing with Iraq have been watching with apprehension the increased flow of Western and Far Eastern businessmen to Baghdad. "There has been a marked absence of Jordanian businesses in Iraq," said Hani

Ibrahim, who heads an Amman-based brokerage firm in commodities. "The vacuum was mostly filled by European and Far Eastern firms which offered flexibility and better payment terms for Iraqi imports. As a result, said the broker, Jordanian exports to Iraq remained at a minimum level in the last three years and the Kingdom was steadily losing its traditional share of the Iraqi market. "Let us hope that it is not too late for Jordanian businesses to ensure a share of the Iraqi market as and when the sanctions are lifted or at least eased in the short term," added Mr. Ibrahim, who believes that "over-cautiousness" on the part of Jordanian traders, coupled with non-availability of foreign exchange through official channels in Amman, had contributed to diminishing business for Jordanians who wanted to do business with Iraq.

Truck drivers continue strike in Aqaba

By Khattab Salman Special to the Jordan Times

AQABA — Truck drivers commuting between Aqaba and Amman Wednesday continued a strike begun Saturday in protest of what they believe are unsafe conditions of the ringroad in the Aqaba area. The strike was called after a truck driver was killed Saturday on the ringroad when he lost control of his vehicle, according to Truck Drivers Union (TDU) sources. Chairman of TDU board Mohammad Abu Haswah said that drivers call the ringroad "the death road"

because 21 drivers lost their lives on that road this year. He said that this 22-kilometre-long road causes thousands of dinars in losses because of the road's sloping angle which reaches 70 degrees, and in effect causes delay in commuting time and damage to the trucks. The JD21 million road was opened to traffic in 1993 as a detour for trucks away from Aqaba. More than 200 trucks use the 350-kilometre-long highway between Aqaba and Amman daily. According to Akram Khreishan, member of the union's board, a strike was earlier staged in 1993 but

was called off after drivers received promises from government officials to improve the road and decrease the slope to at least 40. Minister of Transport Samir Kassar said the accident which took place on Saturday was the result of speeding and not road conditions. Mr. Kassar, who was in Aqaba accompanied by Interior Minister Salameh Hammad and Public Works and Housing Minister Abdul Razzaq Ensour, to look into the case, added that a plan was drawn to resolve the problems facing load transport over the Aqaba ringroad by early

next year. He said a full mandate from the Cabinet was given to the concerned ministries, and funds were secured by the government to conduct any necessary repairs to the road. In his meeting with the journalists Monday, His Majesty King Hussein pledged to make tackling traffic problems in the Kingdom one of the main priorities at the impending programme of reorganisation. The King said he was appalled by what he saw while travelling from Aqaba to Amman along the desert highway earlier this week.

Long vehicles were racing along the road ignoring traffic signs, some of which were misplaced anyway and tyres littered the highway, the King noted. "What was amazing," the King said, "was that there were so many police patrols along the highway," and nothing was being done about the hazardous driving conditions. "This is a priority issue," the King said, adding that something must be done to ensure safety and order on the roads. The King said he was distressed by the number of accidents in the country and what that meant in terms of human and material losses.

Cancer centre opening delayed for 6 months

By Elia Nasrallah Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An "Amal Cancer Centre" which was to have opened by year-end is now expected to become operational in six months, according to centre officials Wednesday. It will take another three months to complete the construction work at the seven storey complex and three more months to become operational, according to Nabih Moammar, director general of the centre. Dr. Moammar said delays in construction and the intricate task of installing equipment were behind the delays.

Last week the centre was visited by a Dutch team of medical experts, said Dr. Moammar. He told the Jordan Times that the Dutch, government and non-governmental organisations have promised to supply the centre with \$11.1 million (half in a grant and half as a loan payable over an extended period) provided that the equipment needed for the treatment of cancer patients comes from the Netherlands. He pointed out that some of the equipment purchased earlier has already been installed at the centre, which, according to initial estimates, would cost JD 17 million to become operational.

Germany, Jordan sign memoranda for JD 1.77m in technical aid

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Germany and Jordan Wednesday signed two memoranda which provide the Kingdom with four million DM (JD 1.77m) in technical aid, thus raising to 12 million DM (JD 5.33m) the total amount of technical aid to the Kingdom for the year 1994. According to the memoranda, signed in Amman by German Ambassador Heinrich Reimer and Minister of Planning Hisham Al Khatib, the allocations for technical aid and expertise would be forthcoming immediately via the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

Under the first memorandum, 2.5 million DM (JD 1.1m) will be available to pay for the cost of training, equipment and the salaries of experts from Germany who will help the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) better control the quality of its agricultural products, its packaging and marketing of its products in Arab and European countries. Michael Bock, charge d'affaires at the German Embassy, told the Jordan Times that the procedure is especially beneficial for Jordan's exports to European markets because with better packaging and better selection of good quality products and grading of the fruits and vegetables, more markets would be open to Jordan abroad. The technical assistance to the AMO includes also the provision of vehicles and grading equipment, according to the memorandum.

Mr. Bock said that the 1.5 million DM (JD 667,000) memorandum covers the cost of studies, expertise, and equipment to be provided by GTZ to the Ministry of Planning. German experts to Jordan under the second memorandum will conduct studies on projects which are given priority in the country's development plans. According to Mr. Bock, the 12 million DM was allocated to Jordan in technical assistance for 1994 during which Jordan also received 55 million (JD14.6m) in financial assistance from the German government. Mr. Bock said every six months Jordanian and German officials and experts meet in Germany or the Kingdom for half-yearly examination of Jordan's requirements of German financial and technical assistance.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

★ Bani Hamida Christmas Display with a variety of small gift items at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, First Circle, Rainbow Street.

NOVEL RECITAL

★ Novel recital by novelist Fayer Mahmoud at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Mahmoud Musa at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
★ Plastic art exhibition by Laila Kawash at the Royal Cultural Centre.
★ Exhibition of works by Mahmud Obeidi at Darat Al Funn. Also showing an exhibition of portraits by Fahrehsa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.
★ Exhibition of paintings by Ismail and Tamam Shammout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
★ Exhibition by artists Latif Al Khateeb and Mukhy Khaleefa at the Housing Bank Gallery.
★ Exhibition at Oman Saudi's Studio, Abdoun Village — Tel.: 829700 until Dec. 31st, 1994.

Work continues on settlement

(Continued from page 1)

hundreds of land which the Palestinians claim as their own. The Palestinians say they hold the deeds to the land proving ownership well before the creation of the Jewish state in 1948. But the settlers at Ephrat claim they have legal deeds proving that the land is communal property and does not belong to private citizens. Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid urged an immediate freeze on the project. "This is not a new district but a new settlement, and the government pledged to freeze the establishment of extra settlements," he said. But the right-wing opposition Likud Party submitted a no-confidence motion in parliament, accusing the government of preparing to suspend the construction project.

There was also a Russian attack on the Kirov suburb, 10 kilometres northeast of the centre, Chechen spokesman Udugov said. The pre-dawn attacks were accompanied by air raids on civilian targets in Grozny and southern villages, despite Mr. Yeltsin's statement Tuesday that bombing of civilians would be stopped. Planes spread terror, bombing an orphanage in Grozny and houses and moving cars south of the city. Mr. Yeltsin's human rights commissioner, Sergei Kovalyov, who is in Grozny,

Census shows 4.095m living in Jordan

(Continued from page 1)

pointing out that most countries conduct a census every ten years and that Jordan's last census was 15 years ago. The information provided by the census would be available to a number of people including ministries that would use the information for planning purposes, he said. Dr. Zoubi said that the department will be releasing more information within the next few days, and the census schedule dictates that the full results be released early in 1995. Statistics from the 10

per cent sampling conducted in November will not be available until October next year.

Following is a table showing the population of the various governorates:

| Governorates | Males | Females | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Amman | 819,126 | 748,782 | 1,567,908 |
| Zarqa | 323,191 | 300,752 | 623,943 |
| Balqa'a | 143,494 | 129,995 | 273,489 |
| Madaba | 55,183 | 51,125 | 106,308 |
| Irbid | 385,264 | 360,510 | 745,774 |
| Mafrqa | 89,156 | 81,747 | 170,903 |
| Ajloun | 47,953 | 46,270 | 94,223 |
| Jerash | 64,107 | 59,088 | 123,195 |
| Karak | 38,395 | 36,342 | 74,737 |
| Tafilah | 31,814 | 29,342 | 61,156 |
| Man | 42,934 | 36,467 | 79,401 |
| Aqaba | 45,284 | 34,461 | 79,745 |
| Total | 2,135,883 | 1,995,696 | 4,095,579 |

Battle for Grozny is on

(Continued from page 1)

clear field of fire over the city. There was also a Russian attack on the Kirov suburb, 10 kilometres northeast of the centre, Chechen spokesman Udugov said. The pre-dawn attacks were accompanied by air raids on civilian targets in Grozny and southern villages, despite Mr. Yeltsin's statement Tuesday that bombing of civilians would be stopped. Planes spread terror, bombing an orphanage in Grozny and houses and moving cars south of the city. Mr. Yeltsin's human rights commissioner, Sergei Kovalyov, who is in Grozny,

told AFP that "if they don't want to bomb civilians in the city, then they shouldn't fly over it." Heavy casualties were feared in Prigorodnoye, 16 kilometres southeast of Grozny, where 16 houses packed with refugees were blown up, residents said. Further south, in Urus Martan, Russian planes struck a road, destroying five cars. A road eight kilometres southwest of Grozny was also attacked during the night, said driver Sultan Mankayev, 45. "Two planes flew right over, I slammed on my brakes, got out and dived into the snow. If only we had

Stinger missiles," he said. A Chechen soldier, Alek Shabazov, said two Sukhoi-27 bombers had been shot down 35 kilometres south of Grozny, but this could not be independently confirmed. Russia's leading liberal, Yegor Gaidar, said he regretted the air raids and suggested Mr. Yeltsin had lost his grip over events in the rebel region. "I was very happy when the president ordered to stop the bombing of Chechnya, but we have information that the bombing of Grozny is continuing today (Wednesday)," he told reporters. "I'm terribly sorry that President Yeltsin lost this chance of seriously promoting negotiations that could lead to peace."

Save water Every drop counts!

U.S. envoy arrives in North Korea to seek pilot's release

SEOUL (R) — A senior U.S. diplomat crossed the world's last cold war frontier from South to North Korea Wednesday to try to win the release of a captured American helicopter pilot.

Thomas Hubbard, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, arrived in Pyongyang after crossing at the border hamlet of Panmunjom, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said in a brief report.

It did not say whether Mr. Hubbard would be allowed to see Chief Warrant Officer Bohhy Hall or who he would meet in Pyongyang.

A U.S. embassy official in Seoul said Mr. Hubbard would seek to meet North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong-Nam.

He said Mr. Hubbard, who took part in negotiations with North Koreans in October aimed at ending the Communist state's suspected nuclear weapons programme, wanted to spend only a short time in North Korea "to secure the prompt and immediate release" of Officer Hall, who is from Brooksville, Florida.

North Korea charged this week that Officer Hall had been on a spying mission when it shot down his helicopter on Dec. 17 and said the case needed further investigation under military law.

The United States has expressed regret at what it called an accidental intrusion it blames on a navigational error during a routine training mission. It says it is unclear if the helicopter was brought down or made an emergency landing.

On Tuesday North Korea released a photograph of a man it said was Officer Hall. It showed him in a flying suit with his hands in the air. It has said Officer Hall is in good health but has not been allowed contact with foreigners.

Seoul's Han Kyoreh Shinmun newspaper quoted an unidentified high-ranking North Korean official at the United Nations as saying Tuesday that Officer Hall's repatriation had been delayed because he was not cooperating with the investigation.

Officer Hall's crewmate, chief warrant Officer David Hilemon, was killed in the crash. Pyongyang released his body on Thursday last week to U.S. congressman Bill Richardson.

Mr. Richardson, a New Mexico Democrat, said Tuesday the United States was being subjected to "water torture" over the pilot but should stay calm and negotiate.

"Obviously the North Koreans are squeezing us. They're putting us through water torture. But I think it's important to stay cool," he said.

Incoming Senate Majority leader Bob Dole has threatened to block the \$4 billion U.S.-North Korean nuclear deal if Officer Hall is not released, the Washington Times reported Wednesday.

Sen. Dole reportedly said he was not prepared to call for an outright rejection of the deal.

Under the accord, Pyongyang agreed to suspend its nuclear programme in exchange for a promise from Washington to supply some replacement fuel oil and organise a consortium to build light-water nuclear reactors worth \$4 billion, which produce much less bomb-making plutonium.

But Sen. Dole was quoted as saying Officer Hall's capture and the death of his co-pilot could be a reason to block "a lousy deal anyhow." He reportedly added: "You can't trust the North Koreans."

KCNK warned this week that Washington must "admit its responsibility as the offender" and show a reasonable attitude "before it is too late."

U.S. officials said undue delay in freeing Officer Hall

could hurt implementation of the October deal. The incident also threatened to disrupt tentative steps towards establishing diplomatic ties as part of the agreement.

The outgoing chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee said Tuesday that Congress might delay the scheduled oil shipment to force Officer Hall's release.

Washington is to provide 50,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, valued at about \$4.7 million, to North Korea by Jan. 21 as part of the nuclear agreement.

A South Korean oil firm contracted to ship the oil for the U.S. Defence Department said the delivery was likely to be delayed. It said it did not know if there were any political considerations.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Mr. Hubbard had reassured it that his North Korea visit would be limited to trying to obtain Officer Hall's release.

Officials of South Korea have expressed concern that North Korea is using its capture of the pilot to squeeze political concessions from Washington.

The North wants to replace the armistice which ended the 1950-53 Korean War by concluding a peace treaty with the United States — but excluding South Korea.



U.S. troops and tank guard the Haitian army fire. The soldiers and others reportedly headquarters in Port-Au-Prince, one day after stormed the building to demand back pay three discharged Haitian soldiers died in a (AFP photo)

U.S. troops patrol Haitian army HQ

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (R) — U.S. troops patrolled Haitian army headquarters Tuesday, the day after Haitian soldiers opened fire on the building during a protest against a military reduction plan.

The shooting Monday killed at least three Haitian soldiers, according to U.S. military officials.

It was the worst violence involving the Haitian military since the Oct. 15 return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power. The soldiers also demonstrated outside headquarters to demand December paychecks and pensions, U.S. officials said.

Details remained sketchy about exactly what triggered the violence, and rumours circulated throughout the capital of Port-Au-Prince that the death toll may be higher.

"The multinational force fired at them (the dissenting Haitian soldiers) but it is not clear if any of the casualties were caused by U.S. or Haitian forces," said U.S. embassy spokesman Stan Schragar.

Some 80 Haitian soldiers were taken into custody by U.S. troops following the shooting, and more than 400 weapons were seized, U.S. officials said.

"What happened yesterday shows that the Haitian military personnel have learned little. They are organised, and there is a sense of desperation which makes things more dangerous for the common people, the multinational force, and the new government," said a Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

To discourage further violence by angry Haitian soldiers, U.S. troops erected barbed wire fences to seal off the army headquarters and the presidential palace across the plaza.

U.S. soldiers were also stationed atop three troop carriers parked outside the headquarters.

Foreign observers have expressed worry that Mr. Aristide's plan to sharply cut the size of the Haitian military might provoke violence and reprisals.

The 7,000-member combined military and police force is the nation's largest employer, and has long been a tool of Haiti's corrupt dictators.

To help reduce army size peacefully, a portion of the tens of millions of dollars in foreign aid pouring into Haiti is for creating new jobs for decommissioned Haitian soldiers. The programme, which has not yet clarified what kinds of jobs will be available, is being coordinated through the office of transition initiatives, funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

Some Haitians say the new jobs would be of little interest to soldiers accustomed to freely brandishing their power and making summary arrests.

"If they can't be police or soldiers, they're not interested in other jobs," said one Haitian soldier serving in the Interim Police Force.

"I'm angry, but I know that this government wants to crush the army so we have to accept it."

Mexico government, rebels closer to talks

MEXICO CITY (R) — The Mexican government and indigenous rebels moved to reduce tensions in Chiapas state late Tuesday, with the rebels welcoming government efforts at dialogue and President Ernesto Zedillo ordering some troops out.

The rebels of the self-styled Zapatista National Liberation Army said in a statement that they "saluted" the government's acceptance of a civil group led by a Roman Catholic bishop to mediate between the two sides.

The Interior Ministry said in response that the government saw "encouraging signs" in the rebel statement.

"The president of the republic has given instructions to the Defence Ministry to withdraw its troops and end its operations in the towns of San Quintin and Monte Libano. This is another example of the willingness of President Zedillo to find paths to build a just and lasting peace."

The two towns on the edge of the Lacandon jungle in eastern Chiapas are very close to the rebels' stronghold.

Military operations there in recent days had been deemed as provocative by the rebels and by critics of the army.

The rebels also said they recognised the Interior Ministry as a valid representative in any future contacts between the two sides via the National Mediation Commission, headed by Bishop Samuel Ruiz.

Bishop Ruiz, a fierce defender of indigenous rights, has been staging a hunger strike for the last week to push for new talks.

"As a developing country, China is devoted and committed to its modernisation," he said. "We pursue an independent foreign policy of peace. We do not seek any sphere of influence abroad."

Mr. Li used the opportunity to dismiss Western and regional fears his bridge-building visit to China's southern neighbour was intended to expand Beijing's influence in the region and towards the Indian Ocean.

Analysts here called the hour-long news conference "unprecedented," noting it was the first by a visiting Chinese leader since the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1950.

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Armless Norwegian man reaches South Pole

OSLO (R) — An armless man and two other Norwegians have reached the South Pole in an unsupported expedition, their spokesman said Wednesday. "Cato Zah Pedersen is the first handless person to reach the South Pole," Hans Christian Erlendson, spokesman for the "Unarmed to the South Pole" expedition, told Reuters. Zah Pedersen, 34, Odd Harald Hauge, 37, and Lars Ebbesen, 39, reached the pole just before 2300 GMT Tuesday. "They are in good shape," said Erlendson, who was informed of their arrival via the U.S. research base at the South Pole. Zah Pedersen, who lost his arms when climbing an electric mast as a boy, pulled a sledge weighing 100 kilograms. The expedition, in which the three carried or dragged all their equipment and supplies, started at Berkner Island on Nov. 4 and covered 1,320 kilometres in 54 days. The three will be airlifted from the pole on Jan. 6 along with Norway's Liv Arnesen, 41, who on Saturday became the first woman to reach the South Pole alone.

This hamburger is a gem

LONDON (R) — A London man bit into a hamburger and found a diamond worth £1,000 (\$1,500), a British newspaper said Wednesday.

Oskar Keywell, 31, found the diamond in a hamburger he bought at a McDonald's, the Sun newspaper reported. With the diamond he found the gold stud of an earring.

Keywell said he showed the manager of the fast food restaurant the gold stud, and was given a free hamburger. But he kept the diamond and later took it to a jeweller, who valued it. Mr. Keywell told the newspaper he was deciding whether to sell it or have it made into a ring for his girlfriend. The Sun quoted a McDonald's spokesman saying that a customer had found a gold earring stud in a hamburger. But the spokesman added: "The customer made no mention of a diamond." A check with staff had shown no one was wearing jewellery, which is against McDonald's rules, the spokesman said.

2 held for burning New York Christmas trees

NEW YORK (AFP) — Police have arrested and are detaining two French men for setting fire to Christmas trees in front of Rockefeller Centre Christmas morning.

Bertrand Delacroix and Jean-Michel Herbert, both 29, had planned to light the 25-metre tree that thousands of tourists visit during the holiday season, according to police reports. Security officers arrested the pair early Sunday after they set four smaller trees on fire. Damages are estimated at \$10,000. Officials have set bail at \$3,000 each, and they are due in court Dec. 30.

7-year-old boy admits killing toddler

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A seven-year-old boy has been arrested for murder in northern India after confessing to police that he threw a toddler into a well, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

Pioneer quoted police saying the boy, known only as Anil, attempted to kill four infants in the space of 12 weeks, but only succeeded in throwing the 18-month-old girl, Nikki, into the well. The murder came to light Sunday when villagers in Uttar Pradesh state, 85 kilometres (40 miles) from here, spotted Anil trying to whisk away a two-month-old infant. After a few minutes of harsh questioning, Anil revealed he had flung Nikki into the well on Dec. 17 and was about to do the same thing to the infant. He then took the stunned villagers to the well where Nikki's body was lying. Nikki's father, Roshan Lal, who had reported his daughter missing a week earlier, took Anil to the police station, the Pioneer said. Police officials said Anil, who had been abandoned by his parents, appeared to be mentally unstable and apparently could not tolerate crying children. The Pioneer quoted villagers as saying that Anil's favourite spot was the butcher's shop in the village where he would beg for food. He himself begged for food and was often seen playing in the gutter during the day.

Zhelev becomes stabilising factor in Bulgaria

SOFIA (AFP) — President Zhelyu Zhelev, a onetime dissident with liberal ideas, is viewed as a factor of stability in Bulgaria, where there have been six governments since communism collapsed in 1989.

The ex-Communists have just won an absolute majority in the latest general election, with the Socialist Party, as the Communists call themselves now, securing 125 seats in the 240-seat parliament in the Dec. 18 poll, according to final results published here Tuesday.

Their sworn foes, the Union of Democratic Forces which formed the outgoing government, got 69 seats.

Mr. Zhelev, 59, founded the anti-communist UDF in 1989 within a month of the fall of the Communist regime. He has often taken the Socialists to task in recent years for undermining the restoration of farmland and blocking privatisation. He argues that only complete economic reform can lead to a genuine de-communisation of the country.

But Mr. Zhelev is expected to call on the Socialists to form a government within a week once a date is set for the new parliament to meet after the results are published in the official gazette Friday.

Socialist chief Jean Videnov, 55, an economist, has already invited all parties which obtained seats to form a coalition.

During the election campaign, however, Mr. Videnov said his party might call for an early presidential poll. He complained that Mr. Zhelev had an "authoritarian streak," as evidenced by changes made in the top echelons of the army, security services and diplomatic service by the transitional government named by the president.

Despite national consensus on one day joining NATO and the European Union, plus agreement on non-interference in the Bosnian

conflict, the foreign affairs field could throw up strains between Mr. Zhelev and the new government.

He was in France on a state visit last month and is due in the United States in February at the invitation of President Bill Clinton.

A White House communiqué said that under Mr. Zhelev, Bulgaria had given up territorial claims in neighbouring countries, was applying U.N. sanctions against rump Yugoslavia, was developing relations with Turkey, Greece and Romania, and was one of the first signatories of the Partnership for Peace programme.

The federal government has no plans to mark any anniversary but that of the final defeat on May 8, but many cities and towns are organising local events.

The sleepy town of Remagen will host a reunion of American and German veterans on March 7, the day when the U.S. 1st Army used the old railroad bridge there to cross the Rhine.

The horror scenes that met the allied troops that liberated concentration camps like Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Buchenwald and Ravensbrueck will come back to haunt the sad ceremonies due in the former Nazi death factories in March and April.

From late April, when the Third Reich was rapidly crumbling, memorable events crop up almost daily — the U.S.-Soviet troop meeting in Torgau, Hitler's suicide, the fall of Berlin, the end of the war and the start of the long struggle to rebuild.

"It's our history and we certainly don't want to try to deny it or hide it," remarked one official born after the war. "But these next five months will not be easy for us."

The year's first major event, the Jan. 27 anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz, presents no problem for Bonn since the former concentration camp is in Poland. President Roman Herzog will represent Germany there but make no speech.

Mr. Herzog's pledge to speak in Dresden on Feb. 13, 50 years after British and American bombers destroyed the elegant city in a firestorm, worries critics who fear the wounds that attack took open have still not healed.

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Germany faces awkward anniversaries of world war

BONN (R) — Five months of war anniversaries recalling the fall of the Nazi Third Reich 50 years ago loom ahead in 1995 for German leaders who would rather look to the future than once again dredge up their embarrassing past.

Events from the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp to Germany's final defeat on May 8, 1945 will be marked with many solemn speeches and acts of reconciliation with former foes.

But even the best-planned events could, if mishandled, turn into a public relations disaster for the democratic Germany that arose from the ashes of World War II.

With the uproar over possible German participation in last June's D-Day commemorations still ringing in their ears, officials are now very cautiously drawing up their plans to recall the horrors of the war.

"It seems like only yesterday we had the 40th anniversaries of all these events," one senior bureaucrat moaned. "I hope we don't do this again until the 75th anniversary — I won't be around any more to see it all."

The 40th anniversary of the war's end went off well

thanks to a speech by then President Richard von Weizsaecker stressing Germany's responsibility for genocide against the Jews and calling May 8 the Nation's Day of Liberation.

But the first major 50th anniversary event — a 1988 speech recalling the "Kristallnacht" pogroms against Jews — ended in uproar when parliamentary speaker Philipp Jenninger appeared to justify Adolf Hitler's appeal.

Mr. Jenninger resigned in disgrace.

Before the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings in France, there was an embarrassing uproar over whether Chancellor Helmut Kohl should attend the ceremonies. In the end, only a senior diplomat represented Bonn.

After that, Mr. Kohl and Germany's present-day allies seemed to agree to mark the end of the war in Berlin with a ceremony stressing their reconciliation and cooperation since 1945 rather than the fighting that led up to Hitler's defeat.

But officials and foreign diplomats in Bonn say Germany, where details for such events must often wait until Mr. Kohl gives his final

approval, could run into severe scheduling problems if it does not decide soon on how it wants to mark May 8.

Britain has already invited Germany and the wartime allies to a youth festival in London on May 7 and Paris and Moscow are expected to announce events of their own soon, they said.

"If the Germans don't make their minds up quickly, they could find someone else has invited everybody for May 8," one diplomat remarked.

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Classical condoms and other New Year weirdness

BRUSSELS (R) — Raise a glass at New Year to the condom that plays Beethoven and the flatulence activists who say breaking wind is healthy.

A little indelicately? Then crack open the bubbly for the guard dog that was stolen, the cat that dialed long distance, or the taxi driver who got a \$30,000 tip.

Or how about a toast to Japanese squid racing, portable British gardens or stuffed Danish puppies — all of which burst on an unprepared world in 1994.

It is time again, as 1995 rolls in, to pay homage to the weird and sometimes wonderful happenings that graced the world in the old year.

Top story — at least as far as New Year revellers are concerned — must surely be the campaign by the Netherlands Liver and Intestine Foundation to make breaking wind publicly acceptable.

Fifteen times a day is about right, the group said.

In Italy, meanwhile, a safe sex-conscious physics student planned to patent a prophylactic that plays classical music of it tears.

His breaks to Beethoven, he said, was not clear if it was "Ode To Joy."

Animals, as ever, added grist to the weirdness mill.

Armless
Norwegian
reaches
Pole

Italian parties deadlocked over crisis

(Agencies) — The crisis in Italy's political arena has reached a new stage as the government's resignation has been rejected by the Italian parliament. The crisis was sparked by the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who was forced to step down after a vote of no confidence. The opposition, led by Romano Prodi, has demanded a new government. The crisis has led to a deadlock between the major political parties, including the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, and the Northern League. The government's resignation was rejected by a vote of 327 to 297 in the Italian parliament. The opposition has now called for a new election. The crisis has led to a period of political uncertainty in Italy. The government has now announced that it will remain in office until a new government is formed. The opposition has rejected this offer and has called for a new election. The crisis has led to a period of political uncertainty in Italy. The government has now announced that it will remain in office until a new government is formed. The opposition has rejected this offer and has called for a new election.

parliament to find a solution. Mr. Fini and Mr. Bossi said Mr. Scalfaro might have to hold a second round of consultations next week, a move that would further postpone any resolution to the crisis. Attention will now switch to talks between Mr. Scalfaro and Mr. Berlusconi, whom he will meet in his capacity as president of the Forza Italia (Go Italy) party at 1500 GMT. Political commentators will be looking to see if Mr. Berlusconi is willing to stand aside as his party's only candidate for prime minister in order to end the crisis. His party, the core of the "Freedom Alliance" which won general elections last March, is divided over whether the media tycoon should demand to stay on as prime minister. Vittorio Dotti, Forza Italia leader in the lower house of parliament, said Monday the party's main aim should be to head a government that reflected the wishes of voters at the last general election. He drew fire Tuesday from Forza Italia colleague Pietro Di Muccio, who said the party should back Mr. Berlusconi. But cabinet spokesman Giuliano Ferrara seemed to indicate Mr. Berlusconi would be unwilling to step aside. "The Berlusconi loyalists are united in feeling that the only problem is setting the date for elections," said Mr. Ferrara, who is also minister for relations with parliament. Meanwhile, one of Mr. Berlusconi's closest aides said the prime minister would never accept merely serving as a deputy. "He will never do it and he will never bow to being in opposition," said Marcello Dell'Utri, an executive at Mr. Berlusconi's \$7 billion a year Fininvest media empire who masterminded his made-for-



Italy's Northern League leader Umberto Bossi arrives at his party's headquarters to meet with party dissident parliamentarians rejecting Mr. Bossi's plans of an alliance with the reformed communists of the Party of Democratic Socialism (AFP photo)

television campaign. His comments, in L'Espresso news magazine, were released ahead of publication. Meanwhile a poll published Wednesday showed a majority of Italians want Mr. Berlusconi to quit politics for good, and 15 per cent want him sent into exile. Voters polled by telephone in the days immediately after Mr. Berlusconi was forced to resign last week showed at best feelings about the media magnate who came from nowhere to win March elections but resigned when his government fell apart last week. According to the survey, taken by the Directa pollsters, 49.3 per cent of voters wanted the media magnate to leave politics for good against 47 per cent who wanted him to continue. Some 28.7 per cent of the 1,025 people polled said Mr. Berlusconi should have remained prime minister while 18.3 per cent said he should remain head of the Forza Italia party he founded earlier this year. Some 34.7 per cent said Mr. Berlusconi should quit politics but be allowed to return to running his business activities. Another 15.1 per cent were fiercer in their condemnation of the former premier and said yes when asked if he should be made to join his friend, the disgraced former Premier Bettino Craxi, in exile in Tunisia.

U.N. commander Rose tries to defuse fighting in Bihac

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The U.N. peacekeeping commander in Bosnia visited the enclave of Bihac Wednesday in a bid to halt fighting which threatens the country's latest ceasefire. Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose flew to Bihac by helicopter from the Croatian port of Split, in his second attempt to enter the northwestern enclave after being blocked by Croatian Serbs surrounding the pocket earlier this month. Bosnia's Muslim-led government has threatened to break the ceasefire if its troops continue to come under fire from Serb forces or their allies, rebel Muslim troops loyal to local businessman Fikret Abdic. "General Rose is visiting Bihac pocket in order to assess the situation first hand, where there continues to be some fighting to the north between Serbs from Croatia and forces loyal to Fikret Abdic on one hand and Bosnian army troops on the other," said Thant Myint-U, a U.N. spokesman in Zagreb. "He travelled there to see what can be done to make Mr. Abdic agree to a ceasefire."

Gen. Rose arrived at the U.N. base in Corralci Wednesday morning and was due to visit Bangladeshi peacekeepers and hold talks with General Atif Dudakovic, the commander of the government 5th Corps defending Bihac enclave, as well as Mr. Abdic. Mr. Thant said the United Nations wanted Croatian Serb troops from the self-declared "Republic of Serb Krajina" (RSK) to withdraw from the enclave and halt military operations supporting Mr. Abdic's troops. "Hopefully, the RSK will make good on their repeated promises to cease all their activities in Bihac pocket," he said. The situation remained tense in the pocket, with sporadic fighting reported near Bihac town and in the north of enclave, where 39 shells or mortar bombs landed southwest of Velika Kladusa, the United Nations said. The Bihac fighting has jeopardised the ceasefire, which was signed by the Bosnian government in Sarajevo and Bosnian Serb leaders but not by Croatian Serbs and rebel Muslims, who have gained the upper hand in the enclave, capturing Velika Kladusa earlier this month. The seven-day ceasefire, brokered by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, is designed to pave the way for a more extensive four-month truce and a resumption of peace talks. It has slowed fighting across the country since it began Saturday. Mr. Thant said the U.N. was making progress in talks on the proposed cessation of hostilities, under which peacekeeping troops would be deployed between the two armies. U.N. officials expect the Serbs and the Muslim-led government to reach agreement on the four-month truce by or close to the planned deadline of Jan. 1, he said in Zagreb. "We hope that we will have the cessation of hostilities agreement within the first

few days in January," Mr. Thant said. Gen. Rose also planned to discuss securing regular supply deliveries for some 1,200 Bangladeshi U.N. troops who have been virtually cut off from the outside world due to a Serb blockade. The U.N. wants to withdraw 400 peacekeepers from Bihac because of Serb obstruction of supply convoys but Croatian Serb authorities have blocked the withdrawal. "The main focus is to secure regular supplies to our troops, rather than pulling them out," Mr. Thant said. In the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, the ceasefire has been holding for the most part but a suspected Serb sniper wounded a 61-year-old woman in the leg Tuesday. "We condemn in the strongest possible way this attack on a civilian," Mr. Thant said. Meanwhile Croatian President Franjo Tudjman has made an unprecedented foray into Croatian territory held by separatist Serbs and placed under U.N. protection since the middle of 1991. Taking advantage of a Dec. 2 accord between Zagreb authorities and the self-proclaimed Serb Republic of Krajina on Dec. 2, Mr. Tudjman travelled Tuesday to the Slavonia region in eastern Croatia along portions of a highway — between Okucani and Nova Gradiska — currently in rebel Serb hands. The road was finally opened to civilian traffic on Dec. 21. Croatian Serbs control about a quarter of the country and in December 1991 proclaimed the "Serb

Republie of Krajina (RSK)." The closure of the Okucani-Nova Gradiska segment of the highway, which used to link Zagreb with the Serbian capital Belgrade, had forced motorists heading for eastern Croatia to use secondary roads, adding 150 kilometres to the journey. Speaking Tuesday in Slavonki Brod, halfway between Zagreb and Belgrade, Mr. Tudjman pledged that rail links between Slavonki Brod and Zagreb and between the Croatian capital and the Adriatic port of Split would also be restored. The December agreement between Zagreb and the Croatian Serbs also calls for the establishment of communication connections as well as water and electricity services between the two entities. "All the Croatian regions (under Serb control) will be liberated," Mr. Tudjman declared, but he added that his government backed "a political settlement" to the conflict. He promised that the civil rights of Serbs living under Croatian rule would be respected. But he warned that if Croatian Serbs "do not accept a peaceful settlement, it would be better if they left Croatia." Mr. Tudjman reassured his readiness to normalise relations with the Serbian Republic in Belgrade "on condition that Serbia and Yugoslavia (now consisting of only Serbia and Montenegro) recognise the internationally accepted borders of Croatia."

Bangladesh government-opposition talks fail

RAJSHAH (AFP) — Main opposition leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced Wednesday that opposition would carry out their "non-cooperation" after last night's talks with the Bangladesh government failed to resolve a long-standing political conflict. He also proposed a legal framework for elections to be held under a neutral caretaker government to be headed by President Abdur Rahman, who belongs to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). "We have no objection to resign to uphold democracy and people's rights," Mrs. Wajed told supporters.

porters of her Awami League, before leading her MPs to the tightly guarded parliament house. There was no immediate comment from the government. Opposition MPs from other groups slowly converged on parliament, but speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali had not arrived late Wednesday to accept their resignation letters. Supporters cheered the legislators as they entered the parliament house, guarded by several hundred armed police and para-military troops, and a police officer said his men had "strict

orders" not to allow anybody, including journalists, into the building. Last-minute attempts at a compromise over the opposition's demand for a constitutional amendment to hold future elections could be held under a neutral caretaker government failed. Despite pressure on both sides from influential lobby groups to reach an agreement, the last minute talks failed over differences over a joint declaration, the time when Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would step down and the wording of a statement, sources said. The opposition want the

government to announce Mrs. Zia's resignation first. A smiling Mrs. Wajed said after the announcement that she felt "relaxed as my campaign is for the people... now it is a one-point campaign to oust the government." She said that under the legal framework proposed by the opposition Mr. Zia would resign and parliament would be dissolved ahead of fresh elections. The president would appoint a serving or retired Supreme Court judge as an interim prime minister, who would not contest the polls, but would form a cabinet of non-partisan members.

Burundi president says crisis over as Christmas gift

BURUNDI (R) — Burundi's president has said the crisis was over as a Christmas gift. The crisis was an artificial one but in Burundi there was a struggle between the forces of war and the forces of peace, so it was necessary to take time to solve it. Trouble started when the mainly Hutu majority Burundi Front For Democracy (FRODEBU), which dominated the government, elected Mr. Ntaryinzi as president of the National Assembly on Dec. 1. UPRONA said Mr. Ntaryinzi was unacceptable, accusing him of inciting Hutus to kill Tutsis last year. Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army is strictly enforcing a night curfew in Bujumbura, imposed last week after some 30 people died in tit-for-tat ethnic killings fuelled by the row.

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India's Congress seeks 'human face' for reforms

DELHI (AFP) — India's Congress (I) Party is seeking with its economic reforms to make them more attractive to voters, but its social commitment to liberalisation remains unclear, analysts here say. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's increasingly delicate position in the Congress is adding a "human face" to the reforms, saying they failed to benefit the poor. The government, while maintaining its commitment to liberalisation, is promising to give its people a populist touch as it seeks to win back the support of the mass of poor and farmers.

He quickly added — and privately to U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner — that he was not opposed to the liberalisation package, but only to its thrust, which Mr. Rao critics say has given the Congress a "pro-rich" image. Even the country's economists are crossing swords over the reforms. "The recent verdict is most certainly not against reforms but against (the) government's failure to deliver goods and ensure a reasonable standard of living," said Ishar Ahluwalia of the Centre of Policy Research, a think-tank. Utsa Patnaik, an economist, disagreed. "It was a vote against corruption and a vote against the new policies of the government," she said, blaming the withdrawal of subsidies on food items as the main reason for the sharp voter swing against the Congress. The wide-ranging economic reforms have boosted exports and imports, and generated unprecedented business in stock markets. But they have also led to an all-round price rise, particularly of basic foodgrains. "Thus income and wealth disparities have grown in the last four years," said economist Arun Kumar. "This growing income differential is

built into the new economic policy and (affected) the poor." The Congress, which faces a strong challenge in the February poll, and the government are predictably worried. Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee said Monday there was no question of the government changing tack on economic reforms, but said it will ensure they "are implemented with a human face." Congress leaders say the party will go for a vote-catching populist programme in the five states which go to the polls, which are being seen as the final rehearsal for parliamentary elections due in mid-1996. The Statesman newspaper said New Delhi may drop plans to further reduce subsidies in the annual budget to be unveiled in February in a desperate bid to win back the support of the mass of poor and farmers.

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Russian troops to mark sad New Year in Chechnya

ON THE CHECHEN BORDER, Russia (R) — Russian troops sent to quell separatist rebels in Chechnya are preparing to celebrate a sad New Year in the trenches, with little hope of a quick end to their unpopular military operation. "We're just feeding fleas here, without even being told what we are here for and what is to come next," an Interior Ministry forces

sergeant said Wednesday as fellow-servicemen decorated a New Year fir tree, delivered by armoured personnel carrier. His battalion, which has been dispatched to the rebel region with thousands of other troops, is waiting on the border between Chechnya and another Russian ethnic republic, Ingushetia, some 50 kilometres from the Chechen capital Grozny. "This is a really sad New Year for me," the sergeant, who identified himself as Alexander, told Reuters. The battalion's commander, Vladimir Ivanovich, said he was trying to ensure his men had at least a few of the simple joys of the New Year holiday, the Russian alternative to western Christmas festivities. "Come and spend New

Year's Eve with us," he said, standing in an open field covered with trenches and dug-in armoured vehicles. "We will have a real New Year tree and champagne." Soldiers all around were busy decorating fir trees delivered from the nearby forest. One tree, near a tank, was topped with a festive five-pointed star. This had been hewn out of a used cartridge box with an axe.

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Blame it on others?

THE EGYPTIAN president, Hosni Mubarak, was quoted yesterday as telling a Kuwaiti newspaper that Jordan "reneged" on an agreement it had with Syria to "sign peace with Israel at the same time." The Egyptian leader said that Jordan's peace with Israel "stirred Syrian reservations."

The charges made by Mr. Mubarak are serious since Syria itself has so far said nothing to this effect. Nor was any such agreement reported by any source.

Jordan has always sought and is still seeking a comprehensive peace because the Kingdom believes that for peace to hold and last it has to be concluded between Israel and all the Arab parties concerned.

Right from the beginning of the Madrid peace process in October 1991, Jordan sought in vain to ensure a minimum level of Arab coordination in order to ensure a better deal for the Arab side. That effort has failed, though, through no fault of the Jordanian side. While Jordan chose to play in tandem with the other parties it at times found itself left behind, especially with the Oslo breakthrough on the Palestinian track.

Not only that. Jordan was pressed by both its Arab brothers and the West. And Jordan pleaded with its Arab brethren, especially Egypt and Syria, to work for the lifting of the blockade against us by their friends in the Arab World and elsewhere. Furthermore Jordan wanted to see, and at a certain stage sensed, real progress on the Syrian-Lebanese track with Israel. We find it therefore odd to hear these remarks at this time when Jordan is seeking to mend Arab differences and bring Arabs back together.

What in fact makes the position of each individual Arab state so vulnerable is the fact that the Arabs are divided. And unless a genuine effort is made to end this division and regain a minimum Arab consensus on national issues, the Arabs will continue to be weak. Perhaps the meeting between President Mubarak, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and President Hafez Al Assad of Syria in Alexandria would lead to a fresh initiative to mend fences in the Arab World by pressing the need to hold an Arab summit.

Egypt, traditionally the leader of the Arab World, could play a positive role in this effort. The psychological effects of the Gulf war and peace treaties with Israel can only be mitigated by a genuine drive at reconciliation. Only a united nation can have a deal on both the regional and international levels.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE COMING year is expected to witness confrontation between Iran and the United States, claimed a writer in Al Dustour Wednesday. Mohammad Kawash said that Washington was expected in the new year to open two fronts against Tehran: one internal and the other external. He said that on the domestic front Washington was expected to set one group against the other in order to weaken the regime which Washington is accusing of siding the Islamist revolutionaries in different parts of the world. The writer said that on the external front Washington was expected to drum up the question of Iran's occupation of the three islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates. According to the writer, the United States is worried about the oil rich Gulf area and concerned over Iran's current moves to spread its domination and influence in that strategic area, bearing in mind the recent Shiite-backed disturbances that erupted in Bahrain. The writer said that there is no doubt that the coming year would witness confrontation which he said will be for the sole purpose of serving the interests of the United States and Israel alone within a plan designed to create a new Middle Eastern order.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Wednesday discussed the current contacts to form a new government capable of dealing with the rapid developments at the domestic and regional levels. We hope that the prime minister will this time be more fortunate and wiser in selecting the team that would help him carry on the task ahead, said Sultan Al Hattab. The writer said it seems that the prime minister this time is not in a hurry to put together a cabinet and he is taking time to think over every single move. Perhaps the prime minister is contemplating involving parliamentary blocs in his coming government in a bid to reduce the opposition effect on the one hand and to ensure smooth and rapid passage of draft laws that are required to cater to the requirements of the coming era, said the writer. He said that Jordan is in need of a government reflecting all shades of the political spectrum in the country and truly reflecting the political pluralism which the Kingdom has embraced with the advent of democracy. The writer said he hoped the prime minister would this time select a group of persons who truly believe in national unity.

The View from Academia

For whom the bell tolls: teachers and the school day

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoub

THE RECENT decree by the Ministry of Education requesting teachers to stay at school till the end of the school day triggers in my mind a few thoughts regarding the decree itself and regarding the teacher's role in school life as a whole.

The decision (which, by the way, is not new; what is new is its enforcement) requests teachers to be present at the premises from the time "the first bell rings" (around 7:45 a.m.) till the time "the last bell rings" (on some days, when there is a sixth class only, at approximately 1:10 p.m., and on other days, when there is a seventh class, at around 2:00).

Formerly, teachers showed up 7:45 a.m., with some exceptions here and there. The exceptions included, primarily, those teachers who did not have a first or second lesson, those who had pressing reasons for not showing up on time (sickness, urgent tasks and missions of sorts, unavoidable delays, etc.), and those who made "special" arrangements with schoolmasters. As for the time of leaving school, it varied somewhat. When teachers had a sixth or seventh class, they left at 1:10 p.m. or 2:00 p.m., respectively. On those days when they finished earlier—say at the end of the fifth lesson, around 12:30; this was almost a binding rule for the vast majority of teachers. Again, there were some exceptions here: those who had legitimate and pressing reasons of sorts and those who made "special" arrangements with schoolmasters.

This has basically been the picture up until the recent decree. I have spoken with several teachers about the decree, with the aim of assessing their viewpoints, and I have found out that they all object to it. Naturally, some of the reasons they give are plausible, common-sensical, perceptive and persuasive. Others are not. On the whole, however, I believe that they have a case.

The following points need to be taken into account when thinking about the wisdom and value of the decision:

1. The time factor. Some people are under the impression (a false impression no doubt) that the minute a teacher finishes his/her last lesson, he/she can leave any time they wish. This is not true, for as I have just mentioned, teachers do not leave (except when they obtain a permission) before the end of the fifth lesson. This is one thing. Another important thing to keep in mind here is that the amount of time in question (which the decree is attempting to have a grip on) ranges merely from one to one and a half hours

(from the end of the fifth period to that of the sixth or seventh), and not a whole working day—as some may think. Let's keep that in mind.

2. The rationale behind the decision. It is not clear in the minds of teachers (and the minds of observers interested in the welfare of education in the Kingdom) why the ministry has opted for enforcing the decision at this particular moment in history. As in the case of many decisions of this sort, the teachers have not been consulted. Are not they fundamental participants in the educational process? Forget that. This is perhaps too democratic for us yet. But ought not they be informed or enlightened in minute detail about the virtues of the decision? This has not happened. I have asked many teachers about the exact wording of the decree and about the reasons cited by the ministry for the enforcement. They do not know. They ought to know, of course; they ought to find out. Admittedly, this is a mistake on their part. But ought not the ministry to go out of its way to explain and justify that is, if there are explanations and justifications as the first place. Are there? "In the general interest of the school," "in the general interest of education and the homeland" and some other such statements are too vague to make sense. One wants specific reasons.

In the absence of cogently formulated, eloquently and effectively planned justifications, one is left free to conjecture and guess. If the reason behind the decision is to have control over and prevent the frequent violations of the working day (I have heard something to this effect), such control and such prevention are better served through other means. It is a bad idea (and this is a phenomenon quite widespread at our public institutions) to attempt to deal widespread exceptional cases and minor violations through a general decision or regulation involving everybody. In my opinion, this is a form of what may be called "administrative impotence." If a schoolmaster allows his "buddies" to leave earlier than others, and if a teacher makes too many excuses and gives too many pretexts for coming to school late and leaving early, such headmaster and such teacher are to be questioned and firmly asked to change their behaviors. We should not be coy, afraid or "kind" and "generous" in dealing with violators and rule breakers.

If the reason is to equate teachers with other public servants and employees who work from 8:00-2:00 (and I have heard something to this effect also), the analogy does not apply. For one thing, teachers come to school at no later than 7:40, some even earlier. Some in fact give free extra lessons to students at 7:00. For another, when a

public employee leaves the premises at two, he/she leaves free; the work remains behind. The teacher, on the other hand, takes his work with him, copybooks to fill out, essays to grade, essays to read, etc.

But if the rationale behind the decision is to inject life in schools, many of which are virtually dead (students and teachers come to classes then leave), this is an entirely different matter.

Yes, our schools need life, need activities of all sorts need public lectures and seminars for both teachers and students, need real interaction within their yards and halls. Aside from formal lessons, there is hardly anything else for most of the activities are at best symbolic and marginal. It is a fact that students and teachers at the more privileged schools and educational establishments (in our society and elsewhere in the world) learn, grow and develop (at all levels) at these schools and establishments. The sad thing is that the vast majority of our schools and universities are not "institutions" (in the positive sense), rather, they are primarily buildings, seats and textbooks. Not much else there. "School life?" "Campus life?" Where is it? We want to see it materialize; we all pray for it to come true.

How can it be created? Definitely not by asking teachers to stay at school till the "last bell rings," a "bell" whose reductive Pavlovian and Skinnerian implications and connotations we all know. If we want to have teachers spend ample time at schools (and not just an additional one or one and a half hours), we should think about what we want to have them do. One headmaster told me, and he was not joking: "If I keep all teachers at school, the quarrels and fights among them will at least triple." Under the present system of teaching (we call it "education"), which is composed of nothing but classes and classes and more classes, there is no time for activities; even if the teachers stay at the premises and want to engage students in activities, no students will be available, for all of them have classes to attend.

We want the ministry to tell the bell, and we want the teachers to obey. But what bell? It is the bell which heralds a new change, a restructuring of the school day, a fundamental reorganization of the business we conduct at schools and the way we conduct it. We want a school day which conveniently and effectively allows students and teachers to interact, to engage in fruitful and meaningful activities inside and outside the classroom, and to embark on the road of real education. And we want decrees and decisions which really work, rather than those which look good on paper.

Access denied

By Abdullah Hassanat

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein, during his meeting with leading Jordanian journalists Monday, urged the press to be more accurate and credible in its reporting and to endeavour to portray a fair picture of the situation in the country.

One columnist present at the meeting complained that information available to journalists and writers was so meagre that it made any accurate reporting or editorialising very difficult. This journalist accused government officials of holding back information.

Minister of Information Jawad Anani countered by saying that it was not true the government would not give out information and that he made himself available to journalists at all times.

It so happens that both the journalist and the minister were right. How?

Dr. Anani is a strong advocate of an open information system. He al-

ways talked, sometimes even about very sensitive issues, and that, at least on one or two occasions, landed him in trouble. Yet, not all ministers or government officials talk to the press; and if and when they do, it is done mostly on off-the-record basis. This is basically the result of our centralised government system, despite all of Dr. Abdul Salam Majali's efforts to the contrary.

Ministers and heads of government departments, being accustomed to long membership in the bureaucracy and entrenched in the system they serve, are fearful they might, if they talk, say the wrong thing.

The matter is even more serious than this. There is apparently a doctrine, held by most officials and civil servants, that the press has sinister aims and should not be given any information.

One example is a story we, here at the Jordan Times, have been trying to write about the car market in view

of the recent decision by the government to lower customs duty on cars. One piece of information we needed for our article was the number of cars that were licensed over the past three years. One might think this is an easy matter. It is not. When our reporter approached the Department of Licensing she was told to come back with a letter from the newspaper and address it to the department requesting the release of information. This we did. But when the reporter took the letter to the department, she was told the letter should have been addressed to the Public Security Department which, in turn, would forward it to the Licensing Department. This we did again.

We only ask: "Does obtaining this piece of information require all this hassle?"

We do not think so. Instead of calling for more cars on the press for being inaccurate, more information should be made

available to journalists to enable them to do their job.

What is needed is a freedom of information act that would make all data and all government business public, except for information labelled secret. This secret information should be defined and limited to what is only damaging to national interest.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has been campaigning for years for the availability and use of information and data, and for the establishment of a national information centre. The Crown Prince, and enlightened people everywhere know that the more information is made available to the people the more efficient the society becomes. Otherwise all talk about change will be meaningless. Change can only come about by a change in attitude, and attitudes change only if they become more educated.

The writer is Managing Editor of the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Helping foreigners study in Jordan

To the Editor:

THE ARTICLE "Students who need help are many, but help them?" by English language and literature Professor Al Majdoub (Dec. 15-16, Jordan Times) is written with the Jordanian student in mind. However, the title of this reminded me of the one he wrote for the June 23 issue Jordan Times: "Foreign nationals an asset in language teaching." The correction for me is that foreign nationals can be used to teach Jordanian students with, at the very least, their English no one denies that nowadays good English skills are crucial for graduates who seek well-paying jobs.

In the earlier article, Dr. Majdoub emphasized the importance of helping foreign nationals to teach English second language, 2) that foreign nationals are a potential asset in Jordanian schools (especially residents in particular), 3) the fact that students are usually more motivated to learn a language from a native speaker.

Because native speakers of language may not necessarily have the required degree to teach, a question I would like to bring to your attention is: who will assist that same foreign national to obtain his/her degree at a Jordanian university?

To truly be an asset to Jordan's school system, native speakers of languages (particularly those of us who are living permanently and frugally in Jordan) need to know that we have opportunities to help us receive an education and training in Jordan, if not The Jordanian "establishment" must provide foreign nationals with incentives. In the long run, this will be the benefit of Jordanian students.

We foreigners take seriously how far a good education will make us move effective employees. Many of us have been in Jordan for years (in my case, nearly 16 years), know the meaning of struggle. And we deeply appreciate an opportunity to help us increase our knowledge and intellect help others increase theirs, and to provide for our families and through the means of rewarding career.

I know that I am not the only foreign national who has young and arrived in Jordan without a university degree. And wonderful it would be to have an opportunity in our home country to change that!

The education administration in Jordan could finance education of permanent resident native English (or other) students studying education, English as a second language, etc. for those who agree to repay this opportunity upon graduation, let's say, teaching English for four years in one of Jordanian schools.

Companies could make scholarships, loans and grade award to foreign nationals who are permanent citizens of Jordan and had good excellent high school grades (I graduated in the upper percent of my senior class, for example). Financial aid is necessary, be repaid by the graduate, especially in needed by by agreeing to work for the company for four years at a salary, if need be, or some other incentive.

Universities and English departments could set up financial funds. Each student wishing to be a member would have to contribute a one-time JD 50 fee (for example). An annual committee would be in charge of distributing the money students according to need. If an English department had funds available to all English students the native English-speaker student would then have an equal opportunity to ask for financial assistance.

With such incentives, universities in Jordan would produce foreign national teachers who can teach.

But some university subjects are only taught in Arabic, and an obstacle to obtaining a degree for many foreign nationals. Passing an Arabic language exam, sooner or later, is essential being awarded a degree at most of Jordan's colleges/universities. This is another hurdle for the foreign national struggle and try to pass successfully.

Some specialised colleges only teach in the Arabic language. An English-speaking foreign national is interested in attending a two-year college of library science, for example, this is impossible without fluency in Arabic.

More allowances and provisions should be made for foreign nationals who are permanent residents in Jordan. The Al American University Graduates (AAUG) not long ago organised a trip to Jordan. If something on this scale is made possible by for Arab-Americans, surely someone can organise a group of something like the American American University in Jordan (AAUJ) until someone does that, out of frustration I can organise a group of one called the American American University in Jordan (AAAUJ).

Mrs. Les Marie Rash Zaitou
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Hijack casts shadow over Franco-Algerian ties

By Bernard Edinger

Reuters

PARIS — France's deep ties with Algeria have been strained by a row over the handling of the Air France hijack and French fears of being sucked into Algeria's ferocious civil conflict.

"The new Algerian war has exploded onto the French scene," said Benjamin Stora, a leading French historian of the troubled, often bloody, ties between two countries set face to face across the Mediterranean Sea.

"French politicians are going to have to make some hard choices about future ties with Algeria because the problem is not going to go away," Mr. Stora told Reuters on Tuesday.

He echoed officials who warned that French commandos' successful storming of the plane hijacked in Algeria by fundamentalist gunmen was unlikely to end attacks by such determined groups as the radical armed Islamic group (GIA).

The 54-hour hijacking, which ended in Marseille with the killing of all four GIA guerrillas, would not necessarily be interpreted as a final defeat by the group's leaders, who have rarely enjoyed such interna-

tional attention in the past. "It's only a temporary setback for the kind of terrorist act that feeds on publicity," said Mr. Stora.

Less than 24 hours after the end of the hijack drama, three French and one Belgian priest were murdered in northern Algeria.

Commentators said past waves of hijackings in the Middle East showed there were always endless reservoirs of desperate fanaticism ready to become martyrs for a cause.

The GIA and the companion Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) want to overthrow Algeria's non-elected military government and place the country under Sharia law.

They say France gives Algeria military backing and they have killed 22 French nationals so far in Algeria itself.

France is horrified at the idea of an Islamic regime an hour's flight away across the Mediterranean but relations with Algeria's current rulers are not easy either.

France ruled Algeria as a colony for 132 years until 1962, when independence came only after a bloody seven-year war which left deep scars on Algerian society.

Mistrust is rampant on

both sides. In the aftermath of the hijack, French officials began relating how they argued with their Algerian counterparts about how to end it.

Algeria rejected the use of French police on its soil, and the French feared that Algerian special forces, who expect no quarter from the fundamentalists and offer them none, would cause a massacre if they stormed the plane in Algiers.

Up to 20,000 people may have died in Algeria since strife began in 1992 with the cancellation of elections, which the FIS was poised to win.

French officials were at pains after the hijacking to distance themselves from the Algerian government. "France's economic aid is to the Algerian people, not for one side or another," said Foreign Minister Alain Juppe.

Mr. Juppe said Paris wanted democracy in Algeria and recalled Paris had long pressed military authorities to seek dialogue with moderate forces in the country.

Mr. Stora said it was wrong to believe there was nothing on the political spectrum between the military and the Muslim extremists.

"There are political parties including the National Liberation Front (FLN) which once ruled. They do still exist and we would be well-advised to seek ties with them," he said.

The hijack drama also underlined potential difficulties arising from the presence in France of an estimated five million Muslims, many of them of Algerian origin.

Most specialists agree the vast majority emigrated to France precisely to escape poverty and violence in their home countries and they seek to peacefully integrate into Western society.

But, with high unemployment, many of the children of immigrants are finding all avenues blocked to them. Many rundown suburbs have become replicas of American inner city ghettos where crime and drugs are rampant.

Interior Minister Charles Pasqua has repeatedly warned that Muslim activists are making inroads among such youths.

To add to France's nightmares, French military strategists warn that Algerian scientists have launched a nuclear research programme that deeply worries Paris.

Weekender

SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

King unveils Dragon secret: story of missile going awry

His Majesty King Hussein, who Tuesday left for Austria to have a check up on his ears, revealed during this week's working luncheon which he hosted for journalists and columnists at Basman Palace that he had long ago suffered some damage to his left auricle while test firing an anti-tank Dragon missile which the Armed Forces had just acquired. "The soldier who was firing the missile missed twice, so I took it upon myself to try," the King told the attentive group of journalists. The exercise ruptured the eardrum because unfortunately the King had not taken the right precautions while firing. His Majesty confided in the journalists that he too missed, which probably upset him more than the injury to his ear. "The question of why we were missing the target plagued us all until we discovered the reason," the King said. "As it turned out we should not have been shooting in an area full of sand."

DOCTORS' ORDERS ARE NOT ALWAYS FOLLOWED: Sources close to the King disclosed that the damage to his ear could have been contained had His Majesty followed doctors' instructions. "But the man does not rest, or he can have no rest when the doctors tell him he needs it," one source said. "Doctors' orders are not easily followed by kings, and certainly not this King," the source said. "Often after His Majesty was treated for the ear infection, something would happen forcing him to travel when he should not," added the source. The last time this happened was in April, when Her Majesty the Queen Mother passed away hardly a few days after the King had an operation on his ear in London and was advised not to fly for a period of time afterwards. But this was one of life's tolls.

SOUND JUDGEMENT DESPITE EAR BLUES: Whatever the damage to his ear, the King could not but take keen note of what he reads, sees and hears, in the press as well as in the broadcast media. At the luncheon, among other topics, King Hussein again, as he has done in past, called on the local television media to exercise sound judgement in news worthiness and trim down coverage of his own activities as well as those of the Royal Family. "We are part of the whole Jordanian family," he said. "Whatever activities we undertake are part of our duties. So there is no need to have them on television all the time." At the same time, the King directed that Jordan Television and Radio Corporation make a serious reassessment of the programmes it offers with an eye towards a conscious overhaul of what it puts on the air. Although the corporation had earlier reported that alterations in programming were in the offing, the order by the King was interpreted by some as a message to "fastforward" that process. With such an overhaul, viewers and listeners might one day participate in a media rating system to help producers decide just what it is the public is really interested in.

DECADE-OLD CRYSTAL BALL: Since the start of the democratisation process in 1989, columnists have had few qualms about letting people know what they think and their wrongs could resurface and provide insight into the development of their earlier views and convictions. Some veteran J.T. readers may recall that years ago, in the mid-eighties to be "precise", Marwan Muasher, Jordan's ambassador-designate to Israel, doubled as

a J.T. columnist and university professor. With his imminent posting in mind, we searched our files at the paper and found a piece penned by Dr. Muasher which addressed what he then saw as a need for "a better understanding of Israel." Following are highlights from the piece, which was written following a political squabble between Israel's then Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon under the National Unity Government that began in 1984. The piece, which was by the way inexplicably never published in the J.T., highlights how our colleague and friend from Salt may have had an instinct that he would one day do exactly what he preached: "A political feud between Prime Minister Peres and Trade Minister Sharon seriously threatened the governing coalition, and almost brought about the downfall of the National Unity Government. What I find of interest here is the treatment by our society of such events whenever they occur in Israeli society. We have a tendency to dismiss any Israeli social or political moves as 'staged plays.' This (negative) image of both the Israeli individual and society is most understandable in our culture. In an era where the Arab, and more particularly the Palestinian, individual has been constantly subjected to Israeli injustice and arrogance, it is difficult to draw any human image of anything related to the word Israeli. This fact, coupled with the physical isolation between Arab and Israeli societies over a considerable number of years, has led to an almost total ignorance of the Israeli mind and way of thinking. The idea we hold of Israelis is one we have largely formulated out of myth, regardless of what Israelis are truly like. If we are to think of counter ways of dealing with Israel effectively, we have to acquire a thorough understanding of the Israeli mind. We have to deal with this fact called Israel, and stop acting like we are dealing with a vacuum. That this has not so far happened has already caused us much harm. As the situation stands it is almost impossible to find any literature about Israel other than pure propaganda. There are no research centres where one could obtain information about the people who live across the river, and the ones responsible for one of our biggest problems. I suggest the formation of a research centre for Israeli studies, where information can be collected on all walks of Israeli life. Information and expertise from such a centre could be utilised on the highest levels in taking sounder decisions pertaining to our regional problems." Dr. Muasher's words of nearly a decade ago leaves one wondering if he was not looking into a crystal ball back then, and more importantly perhaps, about how he would be utilising his tour of duty in Israel to do exactly what he himself had called for.

EXPLETIVES DELETED: This same belief in the need for accurate information that the ambassador-designate was advocating was the topic of a recent war of written words between Al Ra'i Arabic daily columnist Samir Hiyari and Director of Maan Government Hospital Tayseer Khreishan. Hiyari had blasted what he described as abominable conditions at the Maan Hospital in one of his columns, thus eliciting a scathing reply to the editor by Dr. Khreishan. The reply was reprinted in the space allotted to Hiyari's column with an editors' note saying that "some dirty words that neither Al Ra'i nor its readers would tolerate" were omitted. Dr. Khreishan's reply did little to counter Hiyari's allegations, but rather occupied significant space highlighting the visits and donations of members of the Royal Family, ministers and other prominent officials to the hospital. In the end, it was a matter of Hiyari's words against Dr. Khreishan's (expletives or no expletives) and vice-versa. Maybe this controversy will result in the formation of independent teams that would conduct unannounced check-ups on

the country's health and other public service facilities to ensure that requirements and standards are being met and maintained.

CHECK THE 'EYEWITNESS': Another Al Ra'i reader, Ali Al Halabi, the honorary consul of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, took offense at a report in the newspaper and quickly wrote its editor in defence of the West African country he represents. Mr. Halabi said that the Al Ra'i reporter quoted an "eyewitness" as saying that more than 14,000 Mauritians, eager to escape the poverty of their country, had applied for 500 jobs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). "What I want the eyewitness to know," wrote the consul, is that these Mauritanian citizens are leaving their own country to take up honourable work in another to improve their living conditions, and not to escape poverty. He said it was the responsibility of the chief editor to verify the words of such eyewitnesses, and that the "alleged" eyewitnesses themselves should witness Mauritania's advances in democracy, political pluralism, freedom of the press and the establishment of constitutional institutions. Maybe Al Ra'i should send a team of investigators to Mauritania right away.

JORDANIAN HITS BUNDESTAG?: The desire to emigrate resulted in a significant success story as was illustrated in a recent familial advertisement in Al Ra'i. The advertisement read: "Haj Ramadan Hammad and sons, Talal, Jamal, Jalal, and Dr. Kamal from Kufir Aaneh, congratulate their cousins Ali Hammad, Yousef Hammad, and Dr. Aref Hammad on the occasion of their brother Dr. Hisham Hammad's election to the German parliament — the first time in the history of the German parliament that an immigrant has won a seat." Although we do not know whether the seat won by Dr. Hammad was indeed in the Bundestag (the advertisement did not say); if so he may stand a chance to be seated next to Dagmar Koehl, Miss Germany of 1977, who secured a parliamentary seat in the October elections for the Christian Social Union.

CHANGE AT VOA: History will witness movement of another sort soon when Voice of America's (VOA) Programme Centre Director Mohammad Gbuneim concludes more than a decade of duty in Jordan. Gbuneim, who said that he very much enjoyed his rather long assignment here, leaves for Washington, D.C. to become chief of the Arabic branch of the VOA. He and his wife Ida, will reunite with their four adult children who are already pursuing careers or completing their higher education in the U.S.

OF MOVES AND MUSICAL CHAIRS: People move, but so do government offices. Keeping track of the "musical chairs" of public facilities, the Amman Governorate moved from Jabal Hussein to the former premises of the Interior Ministry at the Jamal Abdul Nasser Circle. Next week, the Criminal Court is expected to be moved to the same new premises of the governorate. As was reported earlier, the Interior Ministry moved to new premises behind the Royal Cultural Centre, and the General Intelligence moved into a huge new complex located southwest of the King Hussein Medical Centre. But while Interior Minister Salamah Hammad brims with pride over having his new domain completed in record time, citizens have been overheard complaining that it was easier to just walk into the old offices



Mohammad Ghuneim

hack at "Dawar Dakhiliyeh" and actually get to speak to an official. And at the landmark "mukhabarat" blue giant, the colourful Badia police have settled into their new head camp. Back on the job in the government sector in a not-so-new but still rather impressive building, after recovering from a car accident last week, is Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif. Dairy producers and poultry farmers must have shown Mr. Ben Tarif and his ministry some extra consideration during a week that was marked by threats of strikes and conflicts over animal feed supplies. Still analysts say Mr. Ben Tarif will have time to rest because Karak Deputy Samir Habashneh is tipped for the minister's seat in the next Cabinet.

ANOTHER FIRST: Consideration was in the cards also for prominent lawyer Jamal Nasir who was decorated by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands while she was on a state visit to Jordan this month. Dr. Nasir, who is the King's attorney in London and legal advisor to and member of the board of Royal Jordanian, the national air carrier, was awarded the Commander in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau for his contribution and work in the field of aviation. We are told that this is the first time such a medal has been awarded to an Arab on legal merit in aviation affairs. Dr. Nasir's legal portfolio includes working to resolve the controversy over allegations of discrepancies in RJ purchases of Airbus aircraft.

A GRATEFUL TOURIST: Commendations were in order also for doctors at the Petra Polyclinic in Wadi Mousa who cared for British tourist Mrs. C.A. Ohi when she suffered a severe asthma attack while visiting Petra. In a letter addressed to our embassy in London, Mrs. Ohi said that "by chance, the wife of the Minister of Tourism was visiting Petra at the same time and her kindness and prompt action in getting me to the clinic were much appreciated." Mrs. Ohi said she hopes to return to Jordan, "a country and a people to be proud of." On that happy note, we wish our readers a safe, healthy and peaceful new year.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Pervasive censorship

Guardians Of Thought: Limits On Freedom Of Expression In Iran

Middle East Watch, New York and Washington 1993

Iran is a land of paradoxes. It must be admitted by any objective observer that in some respects public debate is certainly freer there than in most other countries of the Middle East. There is a diversity of opinions allowed, in the press as within the Majlis, in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Yet a closer look reveals that censorship is pervasive in Iran, in spite of ongoing lively debates, and the survival of a large book publishing sector which actually flourished until two years ago, when the harsh economics of an industry dependent on imported paper and artificial currency rates caught up with it.

Broadcasts on Iran's state TV — obviously a key medium — are heavily controlled, tending to be grey and deadly dull, often gloomy in spirit. Indeed, one of the most pervasive explanations advanced for the healthy state of book publishing and book sales in Iran since the 1979 revolution is that TV was so boring that many educated people switched off and read books instead.

Probably the worst aspect of contemporary Iran is the sheer uncertainty about what is permitted for a writer or publisher. The constitution and laws count for nothing when their actual implementation is in the hands of powerful, wilful despots. "It is never clear whether what can be said, written and filmed today will be cause for financial ruin, arrest or other punishment tomorrow," claims this report by Middle East Watch.

Application of the Press Law, which looks good on paper, remains highly uncertain in Iran. "Laws are applied selectively and inconsistently, and there is uncertainty as to the governing norms." Even worse, vigilante groups acting for factions within the govern-

ment often resort to violence or bombings in "protest actions" to intimidate and effectively censor their opponents.

In the academic field, purges of teaching staff and highly ideological criteria adopted for students' access to universities — especially for young women — have done much to erode and lower educational standards.

Laughter can be a weapon of the poor or powerless, and political jokes, as George Orwell once said, amount to "tiny revolutions." Certainly, all the evidence given here suggests that Iran's clerical government not only lacks a sense of humour, but a proper sense of proportion too. The regime has punished severely those daring to use laughter to a political purpose. Naturally, cartoonists and writers utilising satire have suffered when they seem to show disrespect for the cherished icons of Iran's regime. More than anything else, it is the image of Ayatollah Khomeini when used in a humorous context — even blurred in outline and frankly ambiguous, as when appearing in the folds of a dress-pattern in a women's magazine — which has roused the mullahs' blind fury.

Among the most sinister of the various tactics used to silence writers and artists in Iran are shrill campaigns of defamation. Some of Iran's most talented film makers have been intimidated in this way. In a daring open letter, film maker Mohsen Makhmalbaf denounced the regime's brutal "public persecution" of his films and of him personally, and went on to declare that the arguments used actually had nothing to do with him. Instead, he claims, "the fight is over nothing other than the struggles between the different factions who seek power."

Such cynicism about the regime's motives for persecuting writers and artists is very common in contemporary Iran. Middle East Watch makes many recommendations to encourage free and diverse expression of ideas there. Three key ones are (1) to open up state-owned radio and TV to non-government spokesmen, (2) to permit new independent radio and TV stations and (3) to allow the establishment and circulation of independent newspaper and political magazines. Unfortunately, these suggestions do not look likely to be taken up — Middle East International.

Anthony Hyman

BOOK REVIEWS

Shedding light on the Shiites

A Lebanon Defied: Musa Al Sadr And The Shi'a Community

By Majed Halawi
Westview Press, Oxford, England 1993

Shiite "radicalism" became a hot topic in the early 1980s, when an assortment of Islamic groups, most notably Hizbollah, embarked on a string of spectacular suicide bombings and the taking of Western hostages in Lebanon. The movement — for want of a better word — attracted various labels, from "Islamic fundamentalism" to "terrorism" and acquired a kind of glamorous notoriety, but it was never very clearly understood.

Majed Halawi's book is, therefore, most timely in that it clarifies the formative events of Shiite history in Lebanon, as this severely disadvantaged community struggled to gain a political voice in the country's complex confessional system. Beginning with the early split in Islam after the death of the Prophet Mohammad, Halawi goes on to explain the nature of the Shiite ideology of opposition to temporal political rule.

His objective is to chart the career of Iranian-born cleric Musa Sadr, who was responsible for restoring the "slumbering Shiites" of Lebanon and galvanising them into action. Imam Sadr's revolutionary Harakat Al-Mahrumin (Movement of the Disinherited) restored to the marginalised Shiite communities of southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley and the sprawling slums of South Beirut sense of dignity and determination.

When verbal persuasion failed, Sadr encouraged the Shiites to take up arms, and so the Amal militia came into being. Halawi's story comes to an abrupt end, however, in 1978, when Sadr mysteriously disappeared during a visit to Libya. As for Amal,

whatever the purity of its intentions, the movement rapidly degenerated into just another armed group. Its prolonged siege of the Palestinian refugee camps in the latter part of the 1980s was unparalleled even by the barbaric standards of the Lebanese civil war.

The reasons for Amal's move to greater violence are complex. While it may be understandable that a powerless group, unable to claim its fair share of the political pie, decides upon more militant tactics as the only feasible way forward, it can also be argued that these were ultimately counter-productive. They merely replaced the quest for a more just social order with a glorification of violence for its own sake. Had Sadr not disappeared, of course, Amal may have followed a very different course.

A number of conflicting opinions have been voiced about Musa Sadr. Some consider that he "betrayed the very ideals which formed the symbolic and rhetorical core of the movement he initiated." The majority of Shiites in South Lebanon, on the other hand, regard him with respect and affection. As far as they are concerned, he did more than anyone to improve their oppressed status and set them on the road to greater participation in the Lebanese political system. But the imam's greatest legacy, as Halawi suggests, "may be the hospitals, orphanages, schools and vocational institutes established under his initiative." This book succeeds in shedding light on a hitherto murky area. In these days of sensationalising an amorphous "Islamic threat," it is both refreshing and fascinating to discover more about the stories behind the headlines. Halawi approaches the topic from two distinct perspectives: from the lofty vantage point of American political science, but also from his own reality as a Lebanese Shiite. "As the war in Lebanon progressed and America's encounter with terror intensified," he states, "I confronted the consolidation of a Manichean vision of us, the West, the altruistic and freedom-loving, versus them, the sinister, zealous and bloodthirsty." It is, in many ways, a personal odyssey and the academic jargon occasionally sounds a little forced. On the whole, however, it is a competent piece of writing — Middle East International.

Maria Holt

Of cars and chips

By Jean-Claude Elias

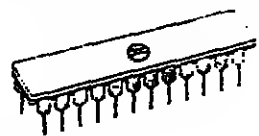
range how history repeats itself. Some of us still member, several years ago, the dramatic recall to a factory by a giant American car manufacturer of thousands of vehicles sold, after having discovered a defect in the braking system. Even more recently, a similar unfortunate happened to a Japanese car maker, though for a smaller batch of machines.

Listening, a few days ago, to the news that Intel is admitted a defect in some of their latest Pentium microprocessor models, brought back memories of the above stories. Intel is the world's most important designer, manufacturer and supplier of the heart and brain of Personal Computers (PC) — The microprocessor chip. From the 80286, now out of production, to the virtually obsolete 80386, and to the popular and fast 80486 chip, Intel is literally driving the world of PCs. Their latest brainchild, the 80586 or Pentium as it is called, released one year ago, has taken the power of the machines to new heights, once again.

It is therefore no surprise that the announcement has shocked those who have already jumped on the bandwagon and purchased a Pentium, or those who are planning to do so. The news is rather reassuring. As with the cars example, it confirms the clear and strong commitment of trustworthy manufacturers to their clients. While in the case of a faulty car braking system, the consumer has all the rights to worry, this for understandable personal security reasons, the case of the Pentium is in no way as dramatic.

The problem with some Pentiums — not all of the models — was a fault in the Floating Point Unit (FPU) operation. Simply put, the FPU is the part of the chip that handles advanced mathematical calculations. The fault would cause the computer to freeze — stop from working. Even those who do not use complex mathematics would suffer from there are several type of programmes and applications that use the FPU, without the user's apparent intervention. Games for instance and drawing software cannot work without FPU.

chip talk



Intel has decided to replace all the faulty chips, estimated at 2 million units, at their expense, including assisting the user in doing the replacement. One can easily imagine the expenditure involved in the operation. For Intel however the stakes are higher than a few million dollars. Although the world leader — by far — of PC microprocessors, Intel cannot ignore Cyrix and AMD, who have been trying to steal a slice of the pie. The two chip manufacturers have had some success in marketing their own versions of Intel-compatible CPUs (Central Processing Unit — another name for the microprocessor) and mathematical co-processors. To maintain their superiority on the market Intel needs the users' absolute trust.

The truth is that Intel and their users badly need each other. The first for obvious business reasons, the second to run with satisfactory speed all the new, power-hungry software that keeps pouring in from Microsoft and others. For the past 15 years or so, both software and chips manufacturers have played with their users a game that doesn't seem to displease any of them. The first know that their products may have some weaknesses and let users discover and report them. The users accept the situation, as long as it leads to improved, faster products, and as long as the frequency and importance of those weaknesses remains within reasonably acceptable boundaries.

Santa Claus with plenty of new Pentium chips in his boot is certainly the dream of all the millions of PC users worldwide.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

CURIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

He who comes across a hunchback in the morning will have a good omen. If he touches his round rump, he will be much luckier.

A housewife who drops one of the utensils in the kitchen while arranging the cupboard may indicate the arrival of an unexpected visitor.

If it happens that she criss-crosses a knife with a fork outside a plate this will bring about misery. In case she isn't left-handed, it won't be much better to stir a drink in a cup using her left hand because this augurs that she may lose seven years from her life.

A man who fastens a lion's skin belt round his waist is said to give courage to its wearer if he lacks it.

He who eats the lion's flesh will recover from quartan fever (a disease that catches a patient for one day, leaves him two days and then comes back on the fourth day).

If a lion's eye is placed under one's armpit inside a small sock made of the lion's skin, one can get rid of animal fears.

It had been observed that some lionesses in Africa fell in love with men!

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

- Don't lose your temper. La tanfa'el.
- Don't make a mess of it. La to'akkid al-omoor.
- Don't give your mind to what he says. La to'irho ihtimaman.
- Don't monopolise the conversation. La tahtakir al-hadith.
- Don't interrupt me. La toqasit'oni.
- Don't be narrow-minded. La takon day'yekal-aql.
- Don't get on my nerves. La tothir a'saabi.
- Don't call him bad names. -- -- La tasobbohn.
- Don't nurse hatred for anybody. La todmir soo'an le'ahad.
- Don't set them at odds. La tothir al-shiqag baynahom.
- Don't overstep the mark. La tatajaawaz hodoodak.
- Don't care a pin. La taktarith.
- Don't argue with me. La tojaadilni.
- Don't rely on him. La ta'tamid alay'he.
- Don't run him down. La tahot min qadrihi.
- Don't fish in troubled water. La tastad fil-maa'il akir.

INVITATION TO LAUGHTER

HUMOROUS LETTERS

Dear Madam,
Please do not beat my little son Richard. He is a very delicate boy. We never beat him at home except in self-defence.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs. Milton.

Dear Mum,
French is my favourite subject and I hate it.
Your loving son,
Tom.

Dear Uncle,
Our school is very good. They ask us to take bath ONCE in a month.

John.

Dear Dad,
Our maths teacher seems to be crazy. Yesterday

she said three and four makes seven. Today she says two and five makes seven.

I wonder why she doesn't say one and six makes seven.

Your intelligent daughter,
Rolls Royce

* Dear Rose,

To my great surprise last night, I saw a woman with a bulging belly, so beautiful and so graceful. She looked as if she had swallowed something in her stomach. When I asked her what was inside, she answered it was a sweet baby and that she loved it very much.

Being unconvinced of what she had said, I found it necessary to get the right answer from you.

Your anxious friend,
Lily.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the difference between a ram, a tup, an ewe, a wether, a gimmer, a reg, a hog and a lamb?
2. Give proverbs opposite in meaning to the following:
 - a- Look before you leap.
 - b- Fine feathers make fine birds.
 - c- Out of sight, out of mind.
 - d- You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
 - e- Many hands make light work.
3. Arrange the following in the order of their size: comet, microbe, atom, sun, earth, proton, electron, filterable virus, moon, shooting star.
4. How can the age of (a) trees and (b) horses be told?

COOKING IS FUN OVEN BAKED FISH

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 egg
- 1 T. water
- 3/4 tsp. Tabasco pepper sauce
- 1 1/2 lbs. fish fillets (fresh or thawed frozen), cod, haddock, perch, etc.
- 1 T. melted butter or salad oil.
- Lemon, parsley and paprika.
- salt and pepper to taste.

METHOD: Combine egg, water, Tabasco sauce, salt and pepper.

Beat until well-blended.

Clean fish and dip in egg mixture. Coat generously with corn flake crumbs. Place on foil-lined baking sheet, and drizzle with melted butter or oil. Sprinkle parsley and paprika over top of fish. Bake in oven for 20-30 minutes, or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serve with lemon.

PUZZLES

ANAGRAMMATICS

Solve the following three clues and from the answers arrange the letters into a twelve-letter word meaning: BAD CONDUCT. One letter has been placed to help you.

[] s [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Flightless bird (3) Team (4) Nobleman's land (5).

Love bytes as life goes on

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaceen

The advantages of the system of communication via computers through the Internet are heralded daily. But I've not yet heard anyone commend the improvement I suspect they will bring to the world's literature and social interaction: the rebirth of the love letter.

A teenage romance of the new millennium can't read something like this. Instantly, her heart beating wildly with anticipation, she approached her modem. Entering her password with trembling fingers, she hoped against hope the green light would be flashing. It was "E-Mail Waiting". Frenziedly, she called up the message. The jumble of codes, numbers and destinations sent a strange tingling through her. He had written, at last. And she was not about to let him slip through the Net.

Love letters have been the dying art form of the more recent years. But we now have the opportunity to watch how the Internet may bring them back. At first sight, passion and the Internet seem unlikely bedfellows. The hot flush of heightened romanticism, in a setting of regimented programmes and a cursor ever eager to delete an exaggerated emotion. But computers have one or two and unique advantages. They give their undreamed-of benefits.

Imagination is at fire in the series of letters, particularly, the language. The Internet is an age when lovers did not create a letter each other the time, live together or speak daily on the telephone. It was distance, separation and longing that strengthened the memory.

some effect. With the telephone we moved away from written communication, and now with E-Mail we are back to where we have to be articulated and thoughtful about how we send these messages. It will not just be on the Internet that electronic mail will make people more thoughtful and articulate. And it will not just be in communication across continents and countries, but even within the same building. Office workers with computer networks and simple message-sending systems have already discovered that messages sent from terminal to terminal are endowed with a brevity and poetry, even literally, that the sender would never aspire to in a face-to-face meeting.

Faced with a blank screen and the chance to compose, the writer can emulate a number of diverse styles. More often, it is the school-studied texts of strained courtship or swelling passion that are quoted rather than the staccato, witty style of contemporary writers. These are vocabularies that would sound at best pretentious, at worst abominably laughable if voiced in the corridor or canteen, but somehow acceptable, even welcomed, on a screen on a wet afternoon.

The only sad aspect about the computer's likely revival of the love letter — and it is a tragedy — is that none of the love letters of the new millennium will survive. A touch of the keyboard and the most passionate expressions of commitment vanish for good.

These words are dedicated to those amongst us who are in love, with the warmest of wishes for a happy and prosperous 1995.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 29

7:30 N.B.A.

8:30 Road To Avonlea

Sara and Aunt Olivia team up while trying to retrieve the lost gold to its rightful owner.

9:10 The Hot Squad

Phoenix Rising

(The Hot Squad are modern-day Untouchables who more than just a tightly knit family, also comprise special crimes police unit charged with apprehending the most wanted of criminals).

The brothers fight to protect their father when vengeful explosives expert escapes from prison and seeks to even the score with him.

10:00 News In English

10:30 Feature Film — Good Morning Vietnam

Starring: Robin Williams

Imported by the army for an early AM radio show, Cronauer, an irreverent, non-conformist doc jay, blasts the airwaves with a constant barrage of rapid-fire humour, and the hottest hits from back home.

11:50 Exile

Friday, Dec. 30

7:30 African Sides

The Hunted

Tom, Sam's younger brother, comes to hide out at the Freedom Ranch after he is the victim of an attempted assassination while in Vienna.

8:00 Hollywood Stuntmakers

8:30 You Bet Your Life

9:00 P.M. Magazine

9:30 Heart Of Courage

An attempt to save a public burning in Florida attempt to catch a hijacker in Canada.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Blanche

Upon graduation from the convent, Blanche has to choose between Napoleon's love and her burning passion for the medical profession.

11:10 Never The Twain

Saturday, Dec. 31

7:30 Harry And The Hendersons

8:00 Innovation

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Murder She Wrote

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Cocktail

Starring: Tom Cruise & Elisabeth Shue

While in search of quick fame and fortune working as a fast-talking and quick-pouring bartender in a flashy New York club, Brian's life gets complicated when he meets the beautiful young artist Jordan Mooney.

11:55 Countdown To The New Year

12:00 A Rock Concert — Foreigner

1:00 A Concert From The Vatican

Sunday, Jan. 1

7:30 Gala

8:15 The Album Show

9:00 The Hidden Room

After her husband's death, Klaira is on the verge of falling in love when suddenly an apparition appears to change the entire course of her life.

9:30 Heartbeat

A local programme which deals with medical subjects pertaining to Jordan.

10:00 News In English

10:30 Feature Film — Miles From Home

Starring: Richard Gere & Kevin Anderson

Faced with a bitter reality and a dying dream, Frank and Terry, the two Roberts brothers, take to the road and become modern-day outlaws.

12:00 The Upper Hand

Tom frustrates his mother's expectations in him as he is engaged in arranging a date with a new girlfriend.

Monday, Jan. 2

7:30 Black Beauty

8:00 Street Hawk

9:10 Shades Of L.A.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Flight Into Hell

Ten pilots get lost in a deserted coastal area where they make forced landing after their plane runs out of fuel.

11:00 Interzzo (Jazz music)

Tuesday, Jan. 3

7:30 Practical Guide to the Universe

8:00 The Detectives

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 The Deep Probe

10:00 News In English

10:20 First Circle

Investigations continue in search of the traitors while an attempt is made to liquidate the scientists responsible for ruining the design of the new voice invention.

11:10 The Piglet Files

The M-15 agents are watching a house for the arrival of an East German agent. Sadly, they seem to have got it wrong and only Peter Chapman can save the day.

Wednesday, Jan. 4

7:30 Home Improvement

Tim gets himself in a lot of trouble after he makes a programme that criticises housewives.

8:00 Life In The Freezer

The programme views the Antarctic in mid-winter. Ghost-like white fish are kept alive by anti-freeze in their blood and giant scar-spiders patrol the sea bed.

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Law And Order

10:00 News In English

10:20 Snowy River

Matt along with his son Robbie works tirelessly to put an end to a drought which has lately hit their territory.

11:10 Coming Of Age

Kenneth Branagh takes longest leap with new *Frankenstein*

By Bob Thomas
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kenneth Branagh always has possessed a young man's confidence in challenging popular beliefs — he proved it when he directed and starred in the film *Henry V* at age 28.

Laurence Olivier was 37 when he directed and starred in a lavish film version of *Henry V* in 1944. It became an instant classic, considered the best Shakespeare ever filmed. Most filmmakers dared not attempt the play again.

Undaunted, Branagh, who had appeared in two movies and directed none, undertook *Henry V*, portraying royalty and commoners alike as a scruffy, unwashed replica of what they probably had been. The results were critical huzzahs and Academy Award nominations for Best Actor and Best Picture of 1988.

Shakespeare's tragedy is a hard enough sell in the film marketplace; with the exception of *The Taming of the Shrew*, his comedies have been totally neglected. Yet, last year, Branagh made an all-star version of *Much Ado About Nothing* that charmed critics and did acceptable box office.

Branagh has directed two modern films: *Dead Again*, a film-noir murder story, and *Peter's Friends*, a kind of British *The Big Chill* about a reunion of university graduates. Neither was well received by critics or the public.

However, the Northern Irish Branagh faced his biggest challenge with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Although remade with variations ad infinitum, the 1931 version directed by James Whale with Colin Clive as *Frankenstein* and Boris Karloff as the monster remains in every film buff's mind.

Branagh reviewed the earlier films and was not deterred. "I was familiar with the James Whale versions (he also directed *The Bride of Frankenstein*), which are the ones I know best of all. The (British-made) Hammer Films I was quite familiar with as well, and I didn't enjoy them very much," he said in an interview.

"One of the things that happened to the genre, I suppose, is that after the Whale films, the whole genre has been thought about as B-picture, especially the Hammer ones. I reminded myself about all these films to think about where we should go. There

would be no point if our film should look like the others and sound like the others.

"I checked out all the films, including my favourite, Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*. It really is the summation of every parody response to the story itself and to the brilliant ways it has been made in the past. Having seen that, I knew what we couldn't do."

The Karloff makeup, with its platform shoes, high dome and bolt through the neck, has long been copied and parodied. Branagh aimed to avoid comparisons with his monster, Robert De Niro.

"We wanted to have a pathwork man, someone put together with bits from other people, which is what happened in the book," Branagh said. "We talked to surgeons and other advisers about what sort of stitches would have been done then under the pressure of time. Dr. Frankenstein would have faced."

"We wanted him to be somebody who was in pain, as though he was covered with sores and cuts; that even as you watched him you knew we were sore."

"We also faced the problem that anybody in

the story does: To make sure (the makeup) was vivid, but within it the actor could be seen and could convey his performance in a way that would touch us, so it wouldn't be too much of a mask."

Branagh, who will be 34 on Dec. 10, published his autobiography, *Beginnings*, at age 28. He is serious about his work, but he is also affable, his boyish Irish face often widening in a smile.

He and his Oscar-winning wife, Emma Thompson (Howards End), met in 1986 when both were cast in an EBC miniseries, *Fortunes of War*. She has said: "I didn't know his work, but I did know he was sort of a young lion in the British theatre. It was sort of keen interest at first sight."

Interest turned to romance, and three years later they were married. Even though they have worked closely, no signs of infatuation have appeared. Both seem to lack the ego of such high-powered performers.

Branagh's actors adore him, says Helena Bonham Carter, who portrays his lover and wife in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. "He has plenty of humour, and for actors he

is ideal because he knows how delicate our confidence is. So he's incredibly tactful."

Branagh was born in Belfast. His family moved to England when he was 9. As a boy he became enamoured with American movies. His all-time favourite was *The Great Escape* about allied prisoners escaping from a German POW camp, which had an all-star cast led by the late Steve McQueen.

"I can do scenes from it... Donald Pleasance and James Garner stealing the airplane... Charles Bronson in the boat with James Coburn... a touching story that really engaged you," said Branagh.

His passion for drama brought him to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, where he dazzled everyone and walked off with the highest prize, the Bancroft Gold Medal. He immediately was cast in Julian Mitchell's play, *Another Country*, then joined the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). His *Henry V* at 23 drew critic raves.

Branagh surprised the theatrical community by leaving the RSC to form his own Renaissance Theatre Group. His productions were electric, similar to Orson Welles'



Kenneth Branagh (left) plays the lead in *Henry V* with Brian Fresson as Exeter

Mercury Theatre in New York in the late 1930s. With his film, *Henry V*, reviewers made allusions

to Welles, who had filmed his masterpiece *Citizen Kane* at 25. But Branagh seems to exhibit more sta-

bility. And with a bit of Irish luck, he may have a longer, more productive career.

Louis Armstrong feted in a general resurgence

By Samuel Fromartz
Reuter

NEW YORK — Hello Dolly, Satchmo's back in town.

Louis Armstrong died in 1971 but the gravel-voiced king of the jazz trumpet is being heard more now than any time since his death.

New issues of long-lost vintage Armstrong recordings were released on CD in time for Christmas shoppers. In early December, a week-long celebration of his music was held at New York's Lincoln Centre featuring the trumpet player some call Armstrong's proudest heir — Wynton Marsalis.

Along with the concerts, an exhibition at the New York Borough of Queens Museum of Art tells the story of Armstrong's life from his childhood in a New Orleans reform school to world fame. The museum is a few kilometres from the Queens home where Armstrong spent his final years.

Marsalis has had much to do with keeping Armstrong in the public eye, even if the young virtuoso admits he can't match Satchmo on the horn, especially Armstrong's piercing high notes.

"He makes me feel good about being alive

and about living in the world," Marsalis said in a recent interview.

"He's got a majestic sound, a big full round tone, and he communicates a personality of warmth and grandeur. It just makes you feel good," Marsalis said.

Marsalis, artistic director of jazz at Lincoln Centre, has come under fire for his traditionalist stance towards the music, but even critics don't fault him for a week-long programme on the father of jazz.

Record companies, meanwhile, have been combing their vaults lately and re-issuing Armstrong's hits, starting in the '90s and lasting until

What A Wonderful World — which made the charts 18 after his death after being used in the film *Good Morning, Vietnam*.

Columbia recently issued *Portrait of an Artist As a Young Man, 1923-1934*, which presents Armstrong's seminal work that first brought him fame. For years, many of the recordings were only available to collectors: of old 78 records.

Another set, *Highlights From His Decca Years*, issued by Decca, features Armstrong pieces from 1924 to 1958. Its scope is larger — spanning much of a remarkable career — but it is less comprehensive than the Columbia set.

The Queens Museum of Art's exhibit, *Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy*, likens his impact on music to Picasso's effect on painting in the sense that Armstrong took what was at hand and made it thoroughly modern.

"With a gravelly voice and a heralric trumpet he changed the world," Dan Morgenstern, director of the Institute for Jazz Studies in Newark, New Jersey, writes in the liner notes to the Columbia portrait series.

Or as bebop trumpeter, Dizzy Gillespie once said when asked about Armstrong's impact: "No him, no me."

The Queens exhibit traces Armstrong's birth into poverty in 1901 in New Orleans through his early musical experiences in the Waifs Home For Boys, and Storyville, the city's famed red-light district.

By the time he travelled to Chicago in 1921, following his mentor, King Oliver, he was on his way to a place in history. In 1923 he made his first recording, and by 1924 was playing to crowds in New York with Fletcher Henderson's orchestra.

Armstrong's groups, the hot five and hot seven, from 1925 to 1927, had a revolutionary impact on jazz.

"With solos such as these, he created a vocabulary of phrases that would echo into music for decades," Morgenstern writes.

"Hundreds upon hundreds of musicians, not only in America but wherever records were sold, studied these solos note by note — to memorize if not actually to play, for the technical demands, not to mention the rhythmic and harmonic ones, were well beyond the capacity of most musicians of the day."

Most people recall Armstrong the entertainer, who played actively to the last years of his life and whose biggest hit was perhaps *Hello, Dolly!* in the 1960s. He easily combined the roles of pop star and artist and never compromised.

He was in a dozen Hollywood movies, served as America's ambassador of jazz after World War II, appeared on scores of radio and television shows, always flashing a grin. His music conveyed a pleasure at being alive.

As the poet Langston Hughes once said: "There is something about Louis Armstrong's horn that creates spontaneous friendships."

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The supermodel comes of age

By Marie-Dominique Follain
Agence France Presse

PARIS — Feted with increasing frequency on newspaper front pages, supermodels are venturing forth from the catwalks and have come of age as a multi-media phenomenon.

Their images nurtured by the press and their egos massaged by agents, they have replaced actresses and princesses as the idols of the popular imagination — and exploited their celebrity by branching out into music, literature, television and the gossip columns.

For the bottom line is:

everything Claudia (Schiffer) Linda (Evangelista), and Naomi (Campbell) touch seems to turn to gold, both for themselves and their worldly-wise entourage.

In October Campbell, a Jamaican-born Briton, published her first novel *Swirl*, predictably enough a go-sit-written tale of a young model's rocky path to fame and fortune.

Despite being paraded by the critics it has sold well — including 43,000 copies shifted in France in a single month. She also cut an album which has to date, however, failed to capture the popular imagination.

Meanwhile Schiffer, a German, has published a book of pictorial memoirs, while featuring as a go-sit magazine regular with or

without her equally high-profile fiancé, U.S. magician David Copperfield.

In the 20 minutes she agreed to devote to AFP out of her jam-packed schedule, she showed herself every inch the well-coached media celebrity — plugging her product while giving away nothing about her private life.

The book, she stressed, was "not an autobiography, but a work about my professional life" written after she received sackfuls of letters asking for details about a supermodel's daily grind.

She chose Monaco as her home because she feels "secure" in the principality's streets, she added. And no, she had no intention of revealing when she and Copperfield planned to tie the knot.

Others of their ilk, including Cindy Crawford and Elle MacPherson, have been given their own television shows. They also plug workout cassettes — a marketing ploy given the patina of credibility by Jane Fonda — or earn millions of dollars for lending their faces to perfume producers.

Schiffer and Crawford, for instance, are under contract to Revlon.

Crawford's pulling power was illustrated at the start of December, when the announcement that she and her sex-symbol Buddhist husband Richard Gere were separating after three years of



Claudia Schiffer (left) and Cindy Crawford pose for Revlon

marriage sparked a media frenzy. Whether the split benefits or hinders her career remains to be seen.

Whatever the state of their love lives, all supermodels share three talismans in common: fame, youth and money.

In this age of digitised sex-appeal, they also need three magic numbers: vital statistics of 90-96-90 cm (35-38-36 in) or as near as makes no difference.

And where better to show off one's perfect proportion than on the 1995 calendar that the top echelons agreed to pose for naked, or as scantily

clothed as makes no difference.

In fact, the supermodels' image has become so all-encompassing that leading fashion parades — has been superseded.

No one takes pictures of Chanel models any more — they photograph Schiffer in Chanel.

And the fashion houses that can afford celebrity rates can also guarantee that, whatever the press may think, their collection will be a bestseller if it's been worn by a star name.

It's all far cry from the profession's first low-key starlets of the post-war era such as Bettina and Capucine.

British models Twiggy

— famed for the androgynous look — and the waif-like Jean Shrimpton, enjoyed minor celebrity status in the 1960s, as Chanel's top performer Ines de la Fressange did 20 years later.

Nowadays much of the mystique has disappeared. The "oldest" stars hire advisors to prepare them and the world for a new career in their mid-30s, while pretenders as young as 14 and 15 camp at the bit to outdo and eventually replace their elder.

Witness emerald-eyed Brandi, the 16-year-old phenomenon making media waves with her rolling catwalk gait that seems virtually to defy the laws of gravity.



Naomi Campbell walks the catwalk at the Louvre in Paris



Supermodel Claudia Schiffer poses with her 1995 calendar in New York

HEALTH & MEDICINE

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29-30, 1994

D

Frogs, toads and flies may yield new drugs

By Ben Hirschler
Reuter

LONDON — Scientists are studying a bizarre menagerie of creatures including frogs, toads, snakes, flies, leeches and sharks in the search for new medicines.

Chemicals found in their bodies may help treat a range of human ailments, including high blood pressure, difficult to cure infections and even cancer, they believe.

The idea of tapping nature for pharmaceuticals is not new. A quarter of western prescription drugs

are based on plant-derived substances and five of the world's top 30 drugs come from fungi.

But now the "bio-prospecting" net is being cast wider.

According to speakers at a "drugs from nature" conference here, the potential of the animal kingdom is huge.

Amphibians alone produce an "awe-inspiring" number and diversity of compounds in glands on their skin, said Dr. Barry Clarke of London's Natural History Museum.

He believes chemicals from frogs and toads may

have particular value in treating skin and respiratory infections.

Special interest is centred on how certain creatures with only a rudimentary immune system manage to survive in a hostile environment, teeming with pathogenic bacteria and fungi.

The key appears to be the production of a series of complex molecules called peptides which provide a potent defence system against potentially lethal microbes.

Peptides isolated from the African clawed toad, called magainins, are

already being tested in the United States by magainin pharmaceuticals.

Results of an early clinical trial on impetigo, a childhood skin infection, proved disappointing, but the concept of using peptides is attracting considerable interest from drug researchers and companies.

Scientists at Tokyo University are working on a peptide called sapecin found in the blood-like substance, haemolymph, in fly larvae. Sapecin appears to be a powerful antibiotic which protects

young maggots from the billions of bacteria which swarm in their natural habitat — rotten meat.

The Tokyo researchers are now working with this chemical to produce a stronger version, small enough to pass through the human digestive system without being destroyed by gastric juices. The price could be a new tablet capable of fighting the growing number of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Sharks, too, may have an in-built anti-microbial system, this time based on a novel steroid compound called squalamine which

appears to protect them from infection.

In some disease areas, animal-based drugs have already arrived.

ACE inhibitors, a new class of heart drugs, were originally derived from the venom of the Brazilian pit viper. Drug designers have refined the original product and synthesised a version which could be given by mouth.

The first such oral ace inhibitor, marketed by Bristol-Myers Squibb as capoten, has been on the market since 1981, and last year it clocked up global sales of \$1.8 billion.

Other venoms may also prove of medicinal value.

Professor Eugene Grishin of the Russian Academy of Sciences believes, since they affect a host of cellular systems. And the chemical venom pool is immense, with 20 different toxins isolated from just one species of scorpion.

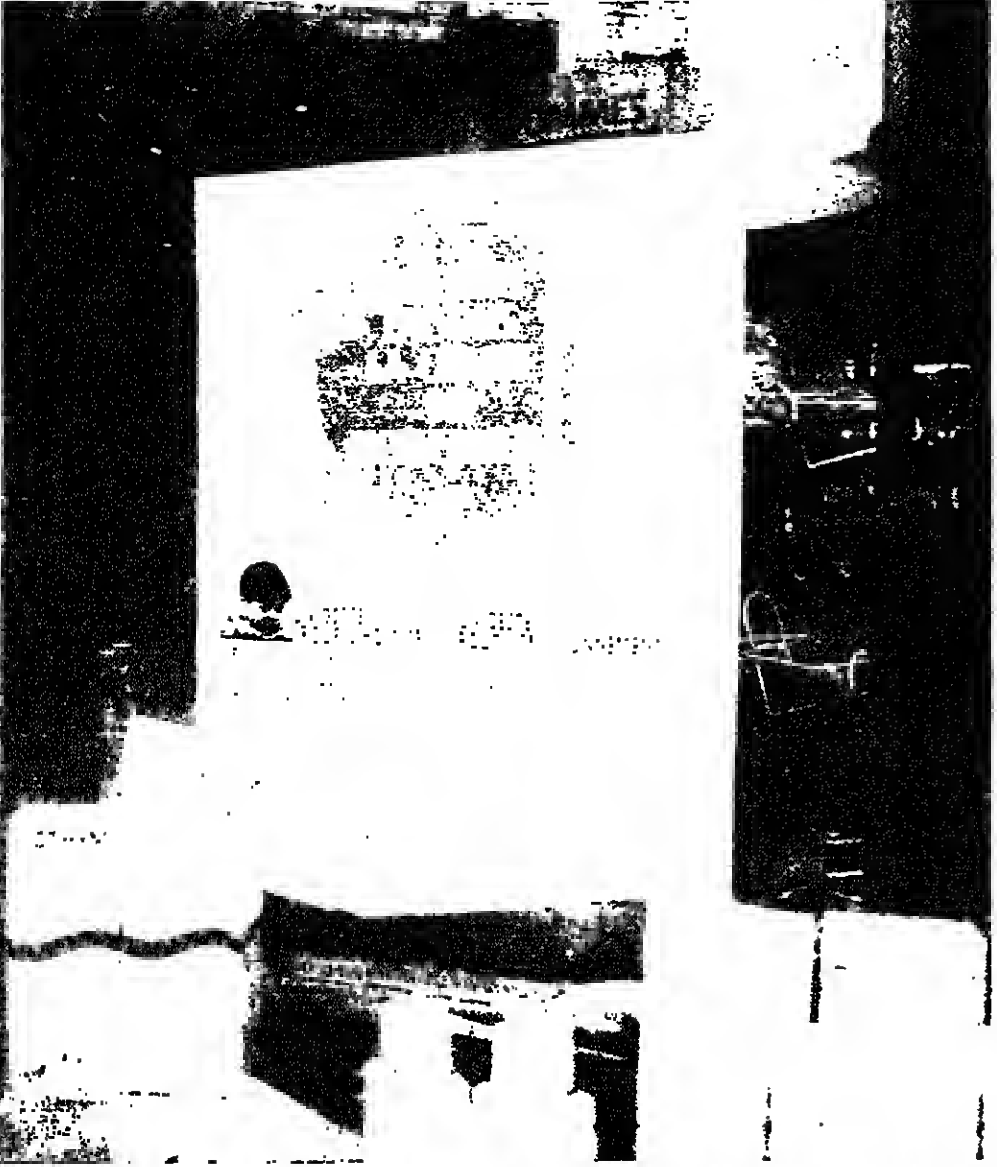
One creature with a long history of medical use which may be about to make a comeback is the leech.

Used for centuries for blood-letting and the removal of "diseased blood", the leech contains a variety of chemicals in

its saliva which stop blood from clotting.

Ciba-Geigy has now developed a genetically-engineered version of one of these compounds, hirudin, which pharmaceutical analysts expect to reach the market in 1996.

Dr. Robert Wallis of Biopharm UK — the world's only commercial leech farm — believes hirudin is only one of several substances in leech saliva which could play an important role in controlling acute coronary syndromes and thrombosis in future.



To preserve the environment and help poor countries Cyc-

Recycling unused medicines

By Florence Raynal

Protecting the environment, helping poor countries and avoiding accidents in the home are the three aims of a simple gesture, that of systematically taking one's unused medicines back to the chemist's. Cyclamed takes care of the rest.

PARIS — "Together, let us form the medicine chain. Let us recover your packaging and unused medicines. Some people lack your unused medicines. And nature does not need them. Return them to your chemist". The message of the Cyclamed association, created under the auspices of the National Order of Pharmacists, are clear, direct and easily understood. The green bags, handed out to customers in dispensaries, come back full. The mobilisation of the profession is widespread. This is revealed by the results of the survey carried out in the Limousin which is the first region in France to have set up this new system of collecting unused medicines, in November 1993.

Backed by the further success obtained in the Loire region, Cyclamed extended the operation

and now, every two months, a new region adopts the system. After Brittany and Aquitaine, it is now the turn of the Ile-de-France region, around Paris, and the North, and the government, supporting the action which is to be maintained, fully intends to have the system extended to the whole of France by the end of the year.

2 birds with 1 stone

The process is simple, at least judging by appearances. There is the message broadcast by the means of publicity used by Cyclamed (posters and stickers) and then there are the measures taken by the chemist who hands out recyclable bags to his customers and urges households to have the reflex of bringing back their unused medicines and the packaging, but nothing else. Objects which cut or prick as

well as soiled dressings are not accepted.

In the dispensary, the items are roughly sorted out. The packaging and out-of-date medicines are put on one side and items which can be used for humanitarian purposes, on the other. The former, left in their green bags, are put into a big cardboard box with "to be destroyed" written on it in red letters. When it is full, it is collected by the wholesaler and distributor on his round and placed in a padded skip located at the distribution agency. Its contents are then recovered by professionals who will see that they are incinerated in a plant which respects the standards in force, which, with the environmental and public health constraints, is, at present, the most appropriate means of eliminating such products, making it possible to produce energy.

The second lot, placed in cardboard boxes with usable unused medicines written on the side in green letters, are made available to "serious" charity organisations, having signed Cyclamed's conditions, by which they

undertake to sort out the contents under the control of a pharmacist and not to use the medicines for illicit or commercial purposes. Four humanitarian organisations have already signed this charter which enables them to lastingly enlarge their collection of medicines. These are Pharmaciens Sans Frontières, Terre Des Hommes, The Order Of Malta and Terre D'Amitie. Other organisations have to get directly in touch with the latter ones. Moreover, Cyclamed is responsible for destroying any waste remaining from the further sorting of the medicines by the association according to its needs.

In addition to protecting the environment by saving medicines, which are usually put in the dustbin, from being dumped, and participating in aid for poor countries, the system has the advantage of improving public health as it limits the numerous accidents in the home by poisoning from medicines.

An obligation made law

The system originated for two main reasons. First of all, it was noted that, of the 18 million tonnes of annual household waste in France (which is about a kilo per person per day), some 60,000 tonnes come from medicines, 95 per cent of which is simply the containers: glass (phials and bottles), paper and cardboard (leaflets and packaging), plastic (blister-packs from pills and capsules, and tubes), and aluminium (tubes from ointments, aerosols, etc.). The second reason is pressure from new environmental laws. Indeed, a decree, in force since January 1993, forces industrialists to

take charge of, or contribute to eliminating household waste produced by the packaging of the products that they launch on the market, and a law in July 1992 provides for the suppression of waste being dumped at all unless it is in its ultimate stage, by the year 2002.

So it was up to professionals from the pharmacy industry to find a solution. Thus the Cyclamed association was formed, grouping together industrialists, distributors and pharmacists, united for the recovery of packaging and unused medicines, and it set up this system which is entirely financed by payments from laboratories (amounting to 0.03 per cent of their turnover). This was immediately approved by the Ministries of the Environment, of Health and of Humanitarian Action.

Today, backed by its success, Cyclamed is waiting to see the impact of the operation in the Ile-de-France area around Paris, whose population is felt to be harder to mobilise, according to its chairman Mr. Jacques Parrot, who, nevertheless, would like to obtain 70 to 75 per cent support. In Paris, the traffic difficulties and the demographic density act as restrictive factors. So, in order not to penalise the distributors who are prepared to adopt the project, there are plans to introduce extra vans to do the rounds. It is to be hoped that the Parisians will be ecology-minded and generous and that the system will be taken up in other countries, which seems to be likely judging by the contacts which have already been made between some of them and Cyclamed — L'Actualité En France.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

TA-DAH!
By Harvey Chew

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New anti-cancer
veggies on the way

BRIGHTON, England (R) — Vegetables grown to contain extra substances known to protect against cancer and heart disease could be in markets within five years, British scientists said.

Researchers at a recent biochemical society conference in Brighton, southern England said fruits and vegetables could be bred to provide more anti-oxidants, which neutralise particles that can help cause cancer and heart disease.

Fruits and vegetables naturally contain antioxidants such as Vitamins A and E. Health authorities in the United States and Britain recommend that people eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day.

But most people eat much less than this and smokers and the poor — who are most at risk — are among the most reluctant to eat their greens. If vegetables could be bred to contain more antioxidants, people with poor eating habits could still lessen their risk of disease.

"Our way would mean that people would eat the same amount of food, fruit, or whatever, but it would contain increased amounts of antioxidants," said Dr. Peter Bramley, head of biochemistry at Royal Holloway College in Surrey, southern England.

"I would say that the introduction of plants that have been manipulated to produce more effective anti-oxidants should be possible within five years," said Catherine Rice-Evans, professor of biochemistry at the United Medical and Dental Schools at London's Guy's Hospital.

The system originated for two main reasons. First of all, it was noted that, of the 18 million tonnes of annual household waste in France (which is about a kilo per person per day), some 60,000 tonnes come from medicines, 95 per cent of which is simply the containers: glass (phials and bottles), paper and cardboard (leaflets and packaging), plastic (blister-packs from pills and capsules, and tubes), and aluminium (tubes from ointments, aerosols, etc.). The second reason is pressure from new environmental laws. Indeed, a decree, in force since January 1993, forces industrialists to

Many Russian women
die in childbirth

MOSCOW (R) — Russian mothers are 20 times more likely to die in childbirth than Western European mothers while the infant mortality rate is three to four times higher than in the West, the Izvestia daily newspaper said.

"It is well-known that Russia's infant mortality rate has grown in recent years. It is three to four times higher than in Europe," Izvestia quoted Russia's International Fund for the Protection of Mothers and Children as saying.

Most of the deaths among mothers could be avoided, and one in three them resulted from abortions, the fund's president, Aleksandr Baranov, was quoted as saying.

"About 80 per cent of the cases result from crude diagnostic errors by poorly-qualified gynaecologists and obstetricians," Mr. Baranov said. "This is unprecedented in the civilised world."

An absence of reliable contraception had led to massive abortion statistics, Izvestia, a liberal publication, said — about 2.97 million of them last year, and 3.17 million in 1992.

ANSWERS
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Rams and tups are adult males.
Ewes are adult females.
Wethers are castrated males.
Gimmers are ewes between their first and second shearing.
Togs and hogs are sheep between weaning (at three months) and their first (at fifteen).
Lambs are not yet weaned.
2. (a) He who hesitates is lost.
(b) Handsome is that handsome does.
(c) Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
(d) It's never too late to mend.
(e) Too many cooks spoil the broth.
3. Proton, electron, atom, filterable virus, microbe, shooting star, comet, moon, earth, sun.
4. The age of a tree can be told, when it is cut down, by counting the number of rings, each one of which is the product of a year's growth.
The age of a horse can be told, up to eight years, by examining its teeth, since certain marks on them disappear each year.

Diagramless 19 x 19
By James Barrick

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Publishers thrive on royal saga

By Allen Nacheman
Agence France Presse

LONDON — In 1994, Prince Charles admitted cheating on his wife, his wife was said to have cheated on him, and his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, decided to drill for oil in the garden.

Also in 1994, leaked documents showed hundreds of royal staff and courtiers living the good life, rent-free, in royal palaces, raising a public furor and prompting calls for a leaner, Scandinavian-style monarchy.

As an aside, the queen's estranged daughter-in-law, Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, announced she had twice been tested for AIDS, and days later a Texas woman who said she was dying of AIDS alleged she and Ferguson once had the same lover, "business advisor" John Bryan.

All in all, it was not the best of years for Britain's royal family coming after the "annus horribilis," which was how Elizabeth II characterized 1992, the year the gentle and insulated 69-year-old monarch seemed to discover the real world.

In that year, like a nightmarish real-time soap opera, the marriages of three of her four children fell apart — two sons separated and a daughter divorced — all garishly chronicled by a cannibalistic tabloid press hungry for royal flesh.

This year, news of the royal marriage-go-round was more orderly, with the juiciest morsels dished up not in tabloids but in three best-selling books and a national television interview with Prince Charles.

Last June, in an unprecedented one-on-one with journalist Jonathan Dimbleby, Prince Charles candidly opened up about his life as heir to the throne of England, his marriage to Diana and their separation.

Once their 10-year marriage was irreconcilably on the rocks, he did stray into adultery, said Prince Charles, validating long-standing rumours of his relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles, wife of an army brigadier.

In October, a book entitled "Princess In Love" chronicled an alleged five-year affair between Princess Diana and army Major James Hewitt, her sons' riding instructor.

The book, by tabloid journalist Anna Pasternak, was written in the style of a teen romantic novel, dwelling on a candlelight dinner in Kensington Palace that prefaced the first night of the wedding.

The book was translated into 22 languages and reportedly made a bundle for all concerned.

Princess Diana drew sympathy, Maj. Hewitt, whose grinning face adorned the book jacket, was rounded on as a "kiss-and-tell rat."

Next came "The Prince of Wales," an "authorised biography" by Dimbleby in which Prince Charles whinges about his miserable childhood in which he was bullied by schoolmates, forsaken by a disinterested mother and disdained by a cold and demanding father who eventually pushed him into a loveless marriage.

Prince Charles' father, the Duke of Edinburgh, granted a newspaper interview to say he had never aired family business in public, and neither had Queen Elizabeth, considered a sound rebuke of his son's candor.

Last on the year's royal publishing bandwagon was "Diana, Her New Life," a sequel by author Andrew Morton to his 1992 book, "Diana, Her True Story," which portrayed the princess as a lonely, desperate woman trapped in a loveless marriage, who had tried suicide.

The new Morton book portrays an entirely new Diana, happy and free, thinking about remarriage and having more kids but not — yet — about divorce, which would raise major legal complications having to do with her future as queen.

The current queen was meanwhile suffering criticism for allowing wildcaters to drill on the grounds of Windsor Castle, said to sit on 100 million barrels of oil.

By Velisarios Kattoulas
Reuters

TOKYO — Could it happen in Japan?

Listen to Nozomi Sato (not her real name), who likes nothing better than a mariachi joint to soothe her nerves after a hard day's work in the heart of Japanese industry.

"I don't drink, don't steal, and don't create trouble, so what's wrong with smoking joints?" she asks.

Police, drug counsellors and a journalist who interviewed scores of drug users and dealers this month for a major magazine, are hearing her question more and more and shuddering at what may lie ahead.

"When I was at Kyoto University 10 years ago there were just two types of Japanese using drugs: artist types and yakuza (gangsters)," said Hiromichi Ugiya, whose article on Japanese drug use has set off a debate about whether this country is headed down a familiar road.

"Now it seems like everybody from high-school and university students to typical salarymen (white collar workers) and housewives are doing drugs," said Mr. Ugiya, who returned home in July after two years at New York's Columbia University.

"It's now as easy to buy drugs in Tokyo as it is in New York," he said.

Shigemi Hirano, deputy director of the National Police Agency's (NPA) drug enforcement division, said many Japanese were getting "a taste for drugs" in America, Europe and South East Asia and then continuing to use them back in Japan.

Some social workers believe the problem is home-grown as Japanese turn to drugs to escape the cradle-to-grave demand for hard work and discipline.

In response to the demand, and in a search for new income to overcome Japan's recession, mobsters are increasingly turning to drug smuggling and dealing, Mr. Hirano said.

Police believe that as the European and American drug markets become more difficult because of crackdowns, Latin American and Chinese gangs are targeting Japan.

Japan heading down a familiar drug road



"It's now as easy to buy drugs in Tokyo as it is in New York" (File photo)

Drug dealers with portable phones now hang around in many big Tokyo parks. They usually ask customers to stash money in one place while they stash drugs elsewhere.

Police admit drug use is rising, but insist it is not yet a big problem.

"Drug use in Japan has been rising since the early 1970s when the hippie movement blew off in America," said Mr. Hirano. "But it's not a problem like it is in America. Japanese police seized hundreds of kilos of drugs

last year, while American police probably seized hundreds of tonnes."

Despite the relatively small seizures, drugs are not new to Japan. It was Japanese chemists who back in the mid-1940s discovered metamphetamines — or speed.

In World War II Japanese authorities gave "speed" to arms factory workers to make them work more and there has always been speculation that drugs were given to the kamikaze suicide pilots to lessen

their fear of going to die.

Like drug seizures, drug-related arrests are also small by international standards.

In 1993 less than 20,000 people were arrested, 15,252 for speed, 1,933 for cannabis, and 312 for cocaine and heroin.

But Father Roy Assenheimer, co-founder in 1985 of the Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (DARC), said that the number of users is probably much higher, and likely to rise further.

"You have to remember that denial is a very important part of Japanese society," said Father Roy, referring to the police's reluctance to admit widespread drug use.

Speaking at a Tokyo coffee shop he visits every day, he pointed to two men across the road.

"If you asked them, they could get drugs for you," he said.

Father Roy has witnessed a lot of suffering since he co-founded Japan's first drug

rehabilitation centre, which now has 30 branches nationwide treating some 500 people a day.

"A lot of young people take hash and LSD, but they get there from being hooked on something else first," he said.

So far, rising drug use has brought little of the violent drug crime that many American and European cities suffer.

That may be changing. This year there has been an unprecedented wave of yaku-

za-related killings — 30 dead in 200 shootings, he said.

Police believe the rise in killings is linked to stress-shedding sharply increased gun smuggling into the country.

"Drug and guns are very hot now," says Lawrence plan, co-author of "Yakuza," book about Japan's underworld.

Added Father Roy, "worrying. You look at this and in 20 years that of be Japan. It seems half-imagine. But there are a and guns all over the pISS

Leave Earth before it's too late, Carl Sagan warns

By Jane Arrar
Reuters

NEW YORK — When Carl Sagan was a child, he looked up at the stars and wondered what was out there. Now the celebrity astronomer looks back at the view of Earth from outer space and wonders whether there will be anything left here.

Mr. Sagan's latest book, "Pale Blue Dot," examines the planet we live on, a tiny speck of dust in a vast universe, and warns that we must reach out and colonise other worlds before it's too late.

According to Mr. Sagan there is now a consensus among scientists that the odds of a major asteroid slamming into Earth are alarmingly high — much higher than being killed in an airline crash or winning a lottery jackpot.

The probability that the Earth will be hit by a civilisation-threatening small

world in the next century is a little less than one in a thousand," Mr. Sagan told Reuters in a recent interview.

"The probability of dying on a random commercial airline flight is one in two million."

The impact, which Mr. Sagan likens to the catastrophe 65 million years ago which many scientists believe wiped out the dinosaurs and much of other living things on Earth, would send up a thick pall of particles, darkening and then cooling the Earth — wiping out the agricultural base that feeds the Earth's more than five billion people.

The U.S. House of Representatives' Science Committee has proposed requiring the U.S. space agency NASA to map by the year 2005 all Earth-approaching comets and asteroids but the bill has not been passed.

"We live amidst a swarm of comets and asteroids and sooner or later a group of them is going to hit us," said Mr. Sagan. "If we wish to

prevent that disaster we are going to have to be in space," he said.

That would mean increased space exploration, manned and robotic — not an easy feat in an era of cost-cutting and a climate in which NASA receives less than five per cent of the funding of U.S. defence spending.

But while space exploration, still in its infancy, has found no signs of life in this solar system, many scientists believe that beyond our tiny corner of the galaxy, the vast universe must be brimming with life.

"... for all our conceits about being the centre of the universe we live in a routine planet of a humdrum star stuck away in an obscure corner... on an unexceptional galaxy which is one of about 100 billion galaxies," Mr. Sagan said, summing up one of the messages of "Pale Blue Dot."

"That is the fundamental fact of the universe we in-

habit and it is very good for us to understand that," he said.

Although manned space exploration has stalled in the 25 years since the United States — in what Mr. Sagan describes as a cold war power play — sent men to the moon, some are still reaching out and listening.

For a NASA programme to listen for radio waves in space for signs of intelligent life, private donors have come up with \$7 million to revive the project, which will hit the intergalactic air from Australia next year.

Somewhere in space, the two Voyager spacecraft in their journey through the Milky Way, are carrying golden phonograph records with greetings in 59 human languages and one whale language and Earth sounds ranging from a pygmy girl's initiation song to Chuck Berry's rock tune "Johnny B. Goode."

Mr. Sagan, whose books and television programmes

have explained the mysteries of the universe to millions of people around the world, says we must explore other worlds for our own survival.

We have lost touch with the heavens since our ancestors first followed the stars and named the days of the week after the planets, he says.

"There's a huge hunger that people all over the world have to understand science," Mr. Sagan said, explaining what he said was the astounding success of "cosmos" — the public television series which reached half a billion people in 60 countries and rocketed him to international stardom.

"We arrange a society built on science and technology and make sure that almost no one understands science and technology — that's the clearest prescription for disaster imaginable," he said.

Mr. Sagan, who decries in his book what he says is the

far fed by some newspaper columnists that once extraterrestrials know where we are "they will come here and eat us," says people should focus less on astrology and more on science.

The astronomer and astrophysicist, now 60, is not resting on the runaway success of "cosmos" — which was also the best-selling book on space in the English language.

In his latest book, subtitled "A Vision of the Human Future in Space," Mr. Sagan runs through what we have learned about the solar system and what we have yet to learn.

The book also answers the plaintive question in the Boh Dylan song "Blowin' in the wind" — how many years can a mountain exist before it is washed to the sea? (about 10 million years).

Since almost dying in a botched appendectomy several years ago, Mr. Sagan

has kept up a steady pace of writing, lobbying and doing projects in his life-long.

The Pulitzer prize-winning author, scientist, lecturer and author who helped robotic missions for NASA, is currently finishing a movie with his wife Ann Druyan, a movie version of his "Contact".

The Warner Bros. movie about extraterrestrial life will be released in 1995, Mr. Sagan said, and Ms. Druyan is working on a series of nomy books and CD multimedia discs aimed at children.

How to reconcile with warnings of our position in a vast universe? "We should listen precisely for religious reasons," said Mr. Sagan. "All God promised Noah is that he would us by flooding — the guarantees."

No Israeli nomination yet

(Continued from page 12)

attitude towards implementation of the agreements between the two countries.

Mr. Bentsur told The Jerusalem Post that Majali had been quoting criticism of the peace process levelled by opposition members of the Jordanian parliament.

"On the contrary," he continued, "we had the impression that King Hussein and the government are coping very well with the criticism. They expressed the hope that various processes would be speeded up but in absolutely no way did they express any complaints."

Bentsur said the meeting had been held to discuss Israel's role in projects of

international cooperation.

Mr. Bentsur said Israel had offered Jordan to provide expertise in the areas of agriculture and housing.

Moshe Hananel, director of Galilee Tours, responded yesterday to reports of criticism from Jordan by saying that Israeli tourism had provided a shot in the arm to the Jordanian tourism industry.

Majali had been quoted as saying that Israeli tourists came for only one day and brought food with them, but Hananel said Israelis who bring their own food do so for reasons of Kashrut.

"The Muslim elements in Jordan understand the problems of Kashrut," Hananel

said, referring to the fact that Muslims have similar restrictions.

He said that, since the peace treaty was signed, about 13,000 Israelis have visited Jordan, 7,500 with his company. Most, he said, had stayed in four- and five-star hotels.

He said Jordan benefitted from visa fees and entry fees to Petra, and that hotels, bus companies, and souvenir shops have also benefitted, especially during the present slack season.

However, Ziv Spector, director of Tzel Midbar, a desert tour company which wants to set up a desert tour centre with a Jordanian company, said the influx of Israeli tourists has resulted in problems for the Jordanians.

Spector is about to leave for talks with Osman Masri, director of Wadi Tours in Jordan.

Spector said the wave of Israeli tourists has swamped the relatively limited Jordanian infrastructure and resulted in wild competition among Jordanian tour companies, which have slashed their profit margins in an effort to attract Israelis.

"They would like to see a better class of Israeli tourists spread out over the next five years or so, but that is something that no one can arrange for them."

Tourism Minister Uzi Baram said yesterday it is too early to judge the effects of peace on tourism between the two countries, Israel Radio reported.

Arafat: Deal on election near

(Continued from page 11)

without permission.

Orient House said in a statement that the law "will not change the status of Palestinians in Jerusalem nor the Arab character of the city, which will forever stay the capital of the State of Palestine."

It said its "political activities... will continue without any reduction."

The law "seriously violates" the Israeli-PLO autonomy accords as well as U.N. Security Council Resolution 252, which "considers Jerusalem as part of the territories occupied by

Israel," it said.

The law strengthens Israel's legal grip on Jerusalem, whose final status is negotiated in 1996 with Palestinians.

"No change must be made in the status of the city," its institutions before ever-stipulated by secret negotiations the Israeli government had agreed to the PLO, the chairman said.

Israel earlier this year had secretly agreed to the activities of institutions in East Jerusalem.

But, sources, said to "group sur-

Fahd, Assad meet Mubarak

(Continued from page 11)

the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations," the official told AFP.

"Syria believes that this Israeli-Arab normalization considerably weakens the position of Syria in the negotiations with Israel," he said, asking not to be named.

Israel earlier this year launched diplomatic ties with Morocco and Tunisia, while the six Gulf Arab states eased a trade boycott of the Jewish state.

Mr. Rabin said after his

Muscat visit that "there are openings in various parts of the Arab World."

He praised the "courage and imagination" of Oman's Sultan Qaboos and said the trip to Muscat would serve as an "encouragement of the continuation of the peace process."

A Palestinian diplomat

told AFP the Cairo meeting could lead to an Arab summit, which would be the first to be held in the Egyptian capital since August 1990.

Qatar: No Rabin visit

Qatar has not agreed to host a visit by Mr. Rabin after his groundbreaking visit

to the Gulf Arab state of Oman, the official Qatar News Agency (QNA) said on Tuesday.

It also quoted Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani as saying Qatar was studying the possibility of setting up an Israeli interests office in Doha.

France probes Airbus hijack

(Continued from page 1)

vealed that security had been stepped up around Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, after he returned to his Chamonix ski holiday in the French Alps following the resolution of the hijack crisis.

Mr. Balladur called an emergency meeting of ministers and security officials in

the wake of the end hijack drama to discuss security implications arising from it.

Mr. Pasqua said the security measures taken in sensitive areas following the hijack, clined to elaborate security reasons.

Japan's current account surplus rises in Asia, falls in Europe

SEOUL (AFP) — Japan's current account surplus with the rest of the world grew by 20.7 per cent to \$12.5 billion in the first half of the year but the balance with Europe revealed some deficits, figures from the finance ministry showed Tuesday.

The balance with Britain grew from a surplus to a deficit, and deficits with the U.S. and Italy grew massive. A surplus in trade with the European Union was far outweighed by deficit in tourism.

The current account surplus with the United States rose by 15.4 per cent to \$2.1 billion, but the surplus with the European Union grew by 36.8 per cent to \$6.6 billion.

Asia grew on strong exports and increased income regional investment, the ministry said.

The ministry's regional breakdown of Japan's balance of payments, issued Tuesday, also showed that the surplus in the long-term capital account in the six months to June mainly resulted from inflows from Britain

and the United States.

During the first half, the current account surplus with Asia, excluding China and other communist countries, showed the fastest growth for any region.

The overall surplus, measuring trade in both goods and services, was up by 1.6 per cent from the figure a year earlier to \$68.4 billion.

A ministry official said that the sharper increase in the imbalance with Asia coincided with booming exports of semiconductors to the region as well as buoyant shipments of chemicals, processed metals and automotive parts. As a result, the trade surplus alone grew by 17.5 per cent to \$34.6 billion.

Japan's invisible trade deficit with Asia, measuring services such as tourism, shrank from \$920 million to \$67 million, despite sharp increases in the country's transportation and travel deficits with the region.

The main factor behind the smaller invisible deficit was a surge in investment income, which saw net inflows more

than double from \$1.3 billion to \$2.9 billion. Such income covers both interest and dividends.

Japan's current account deficit with other major trading partners in the Asia-Pacific region expanded during the six months.

The deficit with China ballooned from \$531 million to \$1.97 billion, mainly as a result of a bigger trade deficit.

The deficit with Australia expanded by 52.4 per cent to \$1.5 billion, reflecting both a larger trade shortfall and a smaller surplus in invisible trade.

The trade surplus with Germany narrowed by 24.5 per cent from the figure a year earlier to \$4.1 billion.

But the imbalance with Britain swung from a surplus of \$2.4 billion to a deficit of \$312 million.

Japan's deficits with its other major European trading partners widened, with the deficit with France expanding 94.7 per cent to \$849 million and that with Italy jumping from \$6 million to \$703 million.

Other figures released by the ministry Wednesday showed that the \$12.5 billion worth of long-term capital flowing into Japan during the six-month period had come mainly from the United States and Britain.

The net inflows, which reversed net outflows of 27.4 billion yen in the same period last year, included \$12.6 billion from Britain and \$9.1 billion from the United States, the ministry said.

Inflows from both countries largely reflected heavy British and American buying of Japanese securities, about \$24 billion each in net purchases.

At the same time, Japanese investors slashed purchases of securities from the United States although net purchases of securities from Britain rose modestly.

Other major net inflows included \$5.9 billion from Asia, \$5.3 billion from Canada, \$1.8 billion each from both France and Australia, \$1.7 billion from Germany and \$1.3 billion from Italy.

Turkey to issue one million lira banknote next month

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's banking system is to introduce a one million lira (\$261,000) banknote, Anatolian News Agency said Wednesday.

The note will be printed in January, less than two years after the current largest banknote, 500,000 liras, was introduced, the agency said.

The economy is growing under an annual wholesale inflation rate of 1.1 per cent, predicted to rise to about 140 per cent for all of 1995.

Polish zloty to be partly convertible as of Jan. 1

WARSAW (AFP) — The Polish zloty will become partially convertible as of Jan. 1, IMF chief Michel Camdessus has announced in Warsaw along with Polish deputy premier for the economy and finance Grzegorz Kotliko.

Mr. Camdessus said respondents that the zloty would become convertible for current transactions.

"There will be no exchange restrictions for all current transactions: imports, exports, tourism, services. The controls that remain will apply only to capital transactions," Mr. Camdessus said.

The IMF managing director congratulated the Polish authorities on what he called a "historic" decision, and said that as of Jan. 1, Poland would be in a "normal situation" for countries with a market economy.

The change coincides with introduction of the "heavy zloty," which will be equivalent to 10,000 current zlotys as of Jan. 1.

Mr. Camdessus said Poland was a "very good example" to be followed by other countries in transition, in the light of the success of the reforms made in Poland over the last five years. However, he warned Poland against the high rate of inflation, around 100 per cent this year, which he said could undermine the positive results of the reforms.

"FASHIONS CHANGE, BUT STYLE ENDURES."

*DAJANI'S

Gold & Gems

Amia Hotel Atman

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1994
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You can spend a very happy day at home if you don't allow some outsider to interfere with your pleasure by changing your schedule. Avoid one who is jealous of you and doesn't think logically.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Find the right way to get your plans working out advantageous. Know what it is that the one you love expects of you at this time.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) If you apply yourself seriously, you can gain personal aims quickly and easily. Be sure you pay your own way for amusements with friends.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Know how to gain greater prestige in the outside world, then follow through with ideas. Spend the evening at home with your loved ones.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have fine new ambitions and should get them in operation as soon as possible. Your intuition is working famously for you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be sure to state your aims with those with whom you deal in practical matters. The evening can be very warm with your mate for romance.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be sure you understand your partner's ideas and motivations for better relations between you. Be wise and knowledgeable about any projects.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Put that plan to work which can help to become more efficient at your duties. Listen to the ideas of others you come in contact with.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a good day to contact good friends and plan the recreations which appeal the most to you. Be very happy tonight with your mate.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Begin to plan for the weekend so that all will go more smoothly for you. Invite fascinating individuals into your home for some laughs.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Let your mood be light in dealing with your partners today and get better results on activities. Drive wisely so you do not get into trouble.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a fine day to delve into practical matters and let on the right plan for gaining more prosperity and success in your activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be more concerned with personal matters, and do your best to gain your fondest aims. Show that you are fond of good friends and associates.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon
FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1994
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Until noon, don't give the appearance of trying to find out from companions just what they are trying to do or they will resent it. You will feel that you want to get out of your premises, but wait.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Early go after your finest ambitions and gain them. Complete that matter with a good friend. Make new contacts in the evening.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) Be sure to keep promises you have made to friends and loved ones in the morning. Let the evening be a happy one with the one you love.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Spend the morning handling vocational activities well. Have more consideration for your family in the evening and there will be happiness.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Carry on with talks with some fascinating new contacts in the morning. Complete studies on some new, interesting course of action.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Early get your bills paid and make collections which are possible. Then get into activities which appeal to you the most.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) More talks with partners are needed before you can get agreements worked out right. Be charming with the one you love tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Use neat touch and fine finish on tasks you are doing. Get together with dynamic fellow associates for good results. Use your finest talents.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Show more devotion for your mate, and then get right into the tasks ahead of you. Plan entertainment with friends and loved ones wisely.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Handle tasks connected with kin early in the day. Join friends for fun to relieve tensions and pressure you are under.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Clear your desk of all that paper work in the morning, and later you can entertain others who can be helpful to you on new activities.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take care of important business matters, then you can run off to pleasures which please you very much and you will be refreshed for next week.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Early handle that immediate affair, then do whatever will improve any property you may have. Visit friends early this evening.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

Mexican peso falls anew

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Mexican peso fell sharply Tuesday against the U.S. dollar, officials called sudden decline in the peso unjustified.

A survey of Mexico City showed the dollar rose high as 6.00 pesos from high of 5.10 to 5.60 Monday in New York, the exchange rate was 5.45 to the dollar, representing a 13.4 per cent drop from late Friday.

The peso had already lost more than 30 per cent last week.

Washington, U.S. Treasury Undersecretary for Economic Policy said the peso was not undervalued, but by economic data pressed confidence in its handling of its economic movements in the of the Mexican peso gone considerably what can be justified Mexican economic fundamentals.

Mr. Summers said, "We have confidence in the underlying soundness of Mexican economic policies," he added.

Mr. Summers said that Washington was "in close contact with the Mexican and Canadian authorities regarding the situation in currency markets," noting that "excess depreciation (of the peso) is in no one's interest."

The decline in the peso would lower the price of Mexican exports to the United States, and some fear this could threaten U.S.-Mexican economic ties and possibly imperil the North American Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect at the start of 1994.

Last Thursday, Washington and Ottawa decided to extend a credit line of up to \$6 billion to Mexico to help stabilize the currency.

But in New York, analysts

said the peso was unlikely to recover soon and that U.S. investors were cutting their links to Mexico.

"What you see are investors continuing to downsize their Mexican exposure," said Joyce Chang of Salomon Brothers.

Bob Lynch of MMS International said the Mexican government has to prove it can control its own expenses and reduce inflation to reassure investors. In the meantime, he said the peso could fall below the rate of six to the dollar.

Analysts in Mexico said the decline could create a new debt problem for the country reminiscent of the 1982 crisis sparked by a fall in crude oil prices.

Mexican public debt is estimated at \$75 billion. With private and bank debt included, that figure is around \$130 billion.

Franco-Algerian economic ties to stay on even keel

PARIS (AFP) — Franco-Algerian economic relations should remain on the same level as in the recent past, despite temporary suspension of transport links between France and its former colony, French government officials say.

The suspension of air and sea travel was ordered by France on Tuesday after French special forces on Monday stormed an Air France Airbus in Marseille held by four militant gunmen, who had seized the plane in Algeria on Saturday. They freed about 170 hostages and killed the four gunmen.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur said the suspension would last for several days, the time needed "to judge the situation and to be quite sure that all security measures are in place."

The suspension concerns only passenger traffic, according to the French Transport Ministry. The fate of cargo traffic between the two countries on French flag ships or planes is being left up to the companies concerned.

The ministry and the companies attend a meeting Tuesday to get them to take immediate security measures in the interest of "the quickest possible resumption" of cargo shipments by sea.

In fact for the moment, the suspension concerns only passenger flights of the Air France and Air Alger airlines, as the first ship of the Compagnie Meditterranee due to sail to Algeria is not due to depart until Jan. 4.

Despite tensions between Paris and Algiers over the Airbus crisis, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said Tuesday that he did not think "there is any reason to change the French political line vis-a-vis Algeria."

Nor should French policy change on the economic level: "France isn't going to drop Algeria," said one French government official.

And Algerian Ambassador to France Hocine Djoudi said Tuesday that "despite the present difficulties, we must continue trade and relations between the two countries, for their own benefit and the benefit of all Maghreb countries."

French financial support

for the Algerian government, denounced by the Islamic opposition, represents around six billion francs (\$1.1 billion) a year. And Algeria benefits from private credits guaranteed by the French export insurance agency COFACE, with a ceiling of five billion francs this year for new credits.

All that constitutes "a very important political gesture" by the French government, in view of risks run by French firms in Algeria, says one foreign trade expert. Some countries marked by the same kind of risks, or lesser ones, do not enjoy such advantages, he said.

A line of French treasury loans accounts for around a billion francs.

The total amount of private credits granted to Algeria and guaranteed by COFACE is on the order of 31 billion francs (\$5.7 billion).

French imports from Algeria, 97 per cent of which consists of oil and natural gas, reached 7.8 billion francs last year, down a sharp 22 per cent from 1992. Exports were 11.9 billion francs, up one per cent from 1992.

For the first 18 months of this year, French exports to Algeria amounted to 10.6 billion francs and imports to 6.7 billion.

According to the 1993 figures, France is Algeria's leading foreign supplier and its second-best customer.

China orders broad crackdown on fake money

BEIJING (R) — China Sunday announced a wide crackdown on counterfeit currency, saying the situation was worsening.

A new state Anti-Counterfeiting force met in Beijing Tuesday and adopted a strategy that included public education, the Xinhua news agency

"The number of cases of fake currency has soared in recent years," Xinhua said.

One official was quoted as saying the fake currency problem not only was deteriorating but also "severely obstructing normal economic and financial order."

The strategy calls for education through mass media and training seminars to teach the public and spe-

cialised personnel and treasury workers how to tell real currency from fakes.

Most coastal cities are awash in counterfeit notes, mostly China's 100-yuan denomination worth about \$12 each but also high-quality \$100 bills.

Police have said many fakes are printed in sophisticated workshops in Taiwan and Hong Kong, then smuggled into China by criminal

gangs or corrupt businessmen.

The central People's Bank has responded by improving the quality of China's currency with better watermarks and an embedded metal strip.

Virtually all businesses and financial institutions keep counterfeit-detection lamps wherever they take in cash, but some of the best fakes defy such screening.

Comics

YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER, IF I DON'T SUCK MY UMB OR CLING TO A BLANKET FOR SECURITY...

HOORAY FOR YOU

AS THE YEARS GO BY, YOU'LL PROBABLY DEVELOP A REAL RESENTMENT TOWARD ME...

AND FIND DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET EVEN...

ly Capp

THAT BRUISE ON YOUR KNEE LOOKS A BIT SORE...

YOUR MUM-IN-LAWS TALKING TO YOU, ANDY

DON'T START HER OFF, JACK—SHE JUST WANTS TO GO INTO DETAILS ABOUT THE HIP-JOINT REPLACEMENT SHE'S THINKING OF GOING IN FOR

t'n' Jeff

GIVE YOU A WEEKS TRIAL! I'VE THE JOB! SHOW US YOUR DESK!

OH, THANK YOU SIR! YOU'LL SEE, I'LL PROVE MYSELF!

TWO WEEKS UP ALREADY!

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

"If I gain any more weight over the holidays, I'll have to wear swaddling clothes to the New Year's party!"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SMUNI

ZAUER

DORRAM

URREBB

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: PAYOR HAVEN WIRLE VORTEX

Answer: When the washing machine broke it left me in a LAMER

THE Daily Crossword by Kenneth White

ACROSS

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business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

DEF: Jobless rate is 28%

Development and Employment Fund (DEF) Director-General Ali Jaddou said that a field survey has shown unemployment was standing at 28 per cent. The survey showed the highest jobless rate to be in Amman, 30 per cent in Irbid, 16 per cent in Zarqa, seven per cent in Balqa, four per cent in Karak, two per cent in Tafleh. Mr. Jaddou said the DEF budget for 1995 amounted to JD 10 million, of which JD 2.5 million to be provided by the government and the rest by the European Union and the German Bank for Reconstruction. The DEF chief pointed out that although the fund was set up to help the most needy, 60-70 per cent of those who received loans were not so deprived to qualify for the loan. Still, DEF financed 894 projects for individuals this year for a total of JD 3.6 million and helped provide 1,300 job opportunities. DEF has spent JD 8 million and provided 4,600 work opportunities since it was set up in 1992. The fund aims to finance 1,500 projects and provide 3,000 job opportunities next year (Al Aswaj).

Trading in shares of the Jordan Industrial Resources Company and the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank was stopped temporarily pending a decision by the minister of industry and trade on a price of new shares to be privately subscribed in order to raise the capital of the companies (Al Aswaj).

The Amman Chamber of Commerce is requesting all institutions and companies to fill a special form it has designed to collect up-to-date information about the commercial sector. The form will be distributed upon payment of membership fees for 1995 (Al Ra'i).

A five-star hotel will be built close to Al Waha circle which is now an intersection with traffic lights at the end of the Gardens Street (Wasfi Al Tel Street). The hotel is to be part of an investment in a huge complex (Al Aswaj).

The Housing and Urban Development Corporation will start implementing more than 17 projects, estimated to cost JD 89 million, at the onset of the new year. The projects, which include housing estates in Sahab, Ajloun, Jerash, Ramtha and Aqaba, also cover projects at Abu Nsir, Sahiyet Al Abed, Al Zawahreh, Marka, Tareq, Al Jizeh, Irbid, Umm Qais, Karak, Ma'an and Mafrq. (Al Ra'i).

The General Budget Department is putting the final touches on the budgets of 20 financially and administratively independent government institutions. The budgets of these 20 entities, amounting to no less than JD 550 million, will be forwarded in early January to the Lower House of Parliament for review and discussions. It is the first time that budgets of independent government institutions are submitted to the Lower House and its Financial Committee for debate in response to a request by the House (Al Ra'i).

The chairman of the Israeli chamber of commerce is expected to visit the Kingdom in early January. The Israeli official will reportedly meet Jordanian officials at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, chamber of commerce and the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce (Al Dustour).

The cost of preparing the agricultural policy, the first draft of which was completed by the Ministry of Agriculture, is estimated at \$750,000, to be covered by U.S. financing (Al Dustour).

| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SBEISANI | | | | |
| TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170 | | | | |
| ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 28/12/1994 | | | | |
| COMPANY'S NAME | NO. OF SHARES TRADED | VALUE TRADED JD | PREV. CLOSING PRICE | NEW CLOSING PRICE |
| ARAB BANK | 1220 | 222540 | 182.250 | 181.500 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK | 4996 | 205097 | 4.350 | 4.480 |
| BANK OF JORDAN | 28100 | 106780 | 3.800 | 3.800 |
| MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK | 69550 | 109209 | 1.570 | 1.590 |
| INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK | 114075 | 242133 | 2.120 | 2.120 |
| THE HOUSING BANK | 69650 | 397027 | 5.650 | 5.700 |
| JORDAN KUNAIF BANK | 1508 | 4509 | 2.990 | 2.990 |
| JORDAN GULF BANK | 3450 | 1846 | 1.600 | 1.590 |
| ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK | 500 | 1846 | 3.500 | 3.500 |
| JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK | 28263 | 104565 | 3.700 | 3.700 |
| UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT | 26700 | 133500 | 5.000 | 5.000 |
| BUSINESS BANK | 25600 | 89949 | 3.500 | 3.500 |
| JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK | 18050 | 87490 | 4.830 | 4.850 |
| WEST JORDAN INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING | 250 | 780 | 3.090 | 3.120 |
| AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT | 31500 | 47162 | 1.510 | 1.490 |
| PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK | 52000 | 88392 | 1.700 | 1.700 |
| BANKS SECTOR | 517412 | 1946421 | INDEX NUMBER: 157.78 | CHANGE: -0.101 |
| INSURANCE SECTOR | 3600 | 11998 | INDEX NUMBER: 138.21 | CHANGE: -0.157 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER | 4705 | 7156 | 1.490 | 1.490 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / KEM | 5350 | 7962 | 1.490 | 1.490 |
| JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM | 464 | 3013 | 6.500 | 6.500 |
| JORDAN DISTRICT ELECTRICITY | 100 | 97 | 9.300 | 9.300 |
| JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM | 44015 | 9240 | 2.180 | 2.290 |
| ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS | 100 | 480 | 4.900 | 4.800 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES | 1050 | 3300 | 3.150 | 3.140 |
| NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES | 4400 | 10552 | 2.390 | 2.420 |
| REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 1000 | 1346 | 1.350 | 1.350 |
| JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 6013 | 7267 | 1.210 | 1.200 |
| JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER | 500 | 513 | 1.030 | 1.020 |
| WEST JORDAN INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING | 49600 | 118973 | 2.410 | 2.400 |
| ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & RECONSTRUCTION | 10500 | 69910 | 6.600 | 6.850 |
| JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING | 500 | 722 | 1.420 | 1.450 |
| SERVICES SECTOR | 96667 | 236393 | INDEX NUMBER: 121.39 | CHANGE: -0.572 |
| ATTANJEER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING | 650 | 832 | 1.240 | 1.260 |
| THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES | 69587 | 196066 | 2.870 | 2.870 |
| JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES | 14754 | 44554 | 2.940 | 2.980 |
| THE ARAB POTASH/NEW | 750 | 4258 | 5.500 | 5.700 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY | 1244 | 11611 | 9.300 | 9.340 |
| THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL | 500 | 11611 | 4.600 | 4.580 |
| THE JORDAN WOODEN KILLS | 2883 | 22334 | 7.800 | 7.700 |
| ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING | 16266 | 84490 | 5.120 | 5.200 |
| THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING | 1000 | 2700 | 2.770 | 2.700 |
| ARAB CHEMICAL OSTEOMENTS INDUSTRIES | 582 | 15523 | 16.000 | 16.600 |
| SPINNING & WEAVING | 400 | 1080 | 2.700 | 2.700 |
| RAVIA INDUSTRIES | 2590 | 9703 | 2.730 | 2.720 |
| DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT | 1350 | 21945 | 16.240 | 16.200 |
| ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE | 17750 | 17750 | 17.750 | 17.750 |
| ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY | 21050 | 145648 | 6.950 | 6.850 |
| LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 38726 | 35413 | 920 | 920 |
| GENERAL INVESTMENT | 6000 | 19500 | 3.250 | 3.250 |
| ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING | 1850 | 2533 | 1.370 | 1.360 |
| INTERNATIONAL PESTICIDE-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 2100 | 708 | 2.810 | 2.810 |
| JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 20000 | 107800 | 5.390 | 5.390 |
| JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES | 6500 | 9910 | 1.520 | 1.540 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO | 12750 | 11430 | 840 | 830 |
| NATIONAL OILS & WOOD MANUFACTURING | 2250 | 67250 | 5.300 | 5.250 |
| JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS | 2000 | 3925 | 1.970 | 1.960 |
| ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS | 3400 | 9410 | 2.780 | 2.790 |
| KAMMER INVESTMENT | 800 | 875 | 1.750 | 1.750 |
| UNIVERSAL JORDAN INDUSTRIES | 6810 | 37430 | 5.500 | 5.510 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO. | 250 | 640 | 2.570 | 2.560 |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR | 266302 | 890245 | INDEX NUMBER: 128.13 | CHANGE: -0.507 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 883981 | 3085256 | INDEX NUMBER: 143.60 | CHANGE: -0.081 |
| NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET | 212359 | | | |
| VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET | 268912 | | | |

Jordan Loan Guarantee Corporation helps small businesses get credits

By Salehman Al-Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — A Jordanian company, backed by the central bank as its major shareholder, has begun providing novel backing for small business credit traditionally shunned by private banks, officials said Wednesday.

The company's aim is to encourage commercial banks to extend credit facilities to small and medium-sized businesses, Jamal Salah, general manager of Jordan Loan Guarantee Corporation, told Reuters.

Jordao Loan Guarantee Corporation was set up recently as a public shareholding company with a seven million dinar (\$9.9 million) capital — three million dinars (\$4.2 million) from the Central Bank of Jordan.

The rest of the capital came from two other govern-

ment bodies, 17 private banks, the chambers of commerce and industry and two insurance companies.

The company superceded a \$5 million U.S. Agency for International Development grant project to Jordan to support small entrepreneurs.

Mr. Salah said Jordan's banks have traditionally been interested in large customers who "were less risky and more profitable." He said they shied from lending to entrepreneurs and small business who lacked traditional real estate collateral.

The company's strategy was to help banks to provide venture capital for entrepreneurs in productive sectors, especially women to increase their participation in the workforce.

It has finalised loan guarantee accords with 17 private banks setting individual quarterly-adjusted

loans ceilings.

The company charges 1.5 per cent fees from the loans it guarantees to cover default provisions. Additional income comes from investments.

Mr. Salah said banks currently tend to give two-year loans and the company's loans extended to a maximum of six years, usually with a year's grace period.

Officials statistics show that 90 per cent of Jordan's total industrial firms are small to medium sized. There are over 16,000 such firms.

Bankers say the company had strong government backing as part of efforts to increase economic growth and cut an official 14 per cent unemployment rate in a peace era with Israel.

The company default guarantees cover 75 per cent of loans under 20,000 dinars (\$28,450) and 50 of its upper

ceiling of 40,000 dinars (\$56,900) loans.

Mr. Salah said the company did not give 100 per cent loans to ensure banks, by taking part of the risk, study the feasibility of small business projects before granting loans.

Official figures estimate the cost of creating one small business job at 2,500 dinars (\$3,560) compared to 6,500 dinars (\$9,250) for medium-sized firms and 30,000 (\$42,670) for large-scale industry.

SABIC '94 profits likely up to \$800m

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's industrial giant, Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), is likely to make a profit of three billion riyals (\$800 million) in 1994, its chairman has said.

Abdul Aziz Al Zamel, who is also electricity and industry minister, told a board of directors meeting in Riyadh that SABIC's production capacity in 1994 rose to 20 million tonnes a year from 17 million in 1993.

He did not give a breakdown of the type of products. SABIC produces mainly petrochemicals, plastics, fertilisers and steel.

"SABIC's net profit for the year is likely to be over three billion riyals (\$800 million), about a billion more than last year's, because of our achievements in production and marketing," a SABIC statement quoted Sheikh Zamel as saying.

Its 1993 profit stood at 2.12 billion riyals (\$565 million). SABIC, which accounts for five per cent of total world production of petrochemicals, has embarked on a massive expansion programme to raise its production capacity.



Bargain-hunters charge the shops on London's in the current hard economic climate for Oxford Street Tuesday, the first day of the retailers, the starting date was moved forward stores. The sales used to start in January, but

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Financial Markets

| U.S. Dollar in International Markets | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Currency | Mid Vark Close | 28/12/1994 | 28/12/1994 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.5455 | 1.5450** | |
| Deutsche Mark | 1.5758 | 1.5789 | |
| Swiss Franc | 1.3302 | 1.3319** | |
| French Franc | 5.4410 | 5.3387** | |
| Japanese Yen | 100.30 | 100.42 | |
| European Currency Unit | 1.2068 | 1.2051** | |

| Eurocurrency Interest Rates | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Currency | 1 MTH | 3 MTH | 6 MTH |
| U.S. Dollar | 5.81 | 6.12 | 6.68 |
| Sterling Pound | 5.81 | 6.16 | 6.75 |
| Deutsche Mark | 5.80 | 6.00 | 6.25 |
| Swiss Franc | 5.68 | 6.08 | 6.37 |
| French Franc | 5.63 | 5.93 | 6.37 |
| Japanese Yen | 2.12 | 2.18 | 2.31 |
| European Currency Unit | 5.93 | 6.12 | 6.43 |

| Precious Metals | | | | Date: 28/12/1994 | |
|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|------------------|-------|
| Metal | USD/Oz | JD/Gm | Metal | USD/Oz | JD/Gm |
| Gold | 322.15 | 7.50 | Silver | 4.32 | 0.110 |

| General Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--|
| Currency | Mid | Offer | |
| U.S. Dollar | 0.7030 | 0.7050 | |
| Sterling Pound | 1.0489 | 1.0493 | |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4448 | 0.4478 | |
| Swiss Franc | 0.5273 | 0.5299 | |
| French Franc | 0.1289 | 0.1295 | |
| Japanese Yen | 0.0090 | 0.0091 | |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.3075 | 0.3095 | |
| Swedish Krona | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | |
| Italian Lira | 0.0027 | 0.0029 | |
| Belgian Franc | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | |

| Other Currencies | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|--|
| Currency | Mid | Offer | |
| Dahrawi Dinar | 1.4490 | 1.4510 | |
| Lebanese Lira | 0.041330 | 0.041509 | |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.1660 | 0.1680 | |
| Yemeni Dinar | 2.3000 | 2.3000 | |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.1919 | 0.1932 | |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | |
| Omani Rial | 1.0070 | 1.0080 | |
| U.A.R. Dirham | 0.1908 | 0.1917 | |
| Greek Drachma | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | |
| Cypriot Pound | 1.0015 | 1.0030 | |

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K.J. leads Suns to final-second victory

DALLAS (R)—The veteran Phoenix Suns taught the young Mavericks a lesson in finishing when they erased a five-point deficit in the last 52 seconds of a 15-foot jumper from the corner with 3.7 seconds left for the game-winner.

"We've been running that play all night long," Kevin Johnson said of the pick and roll that set up his shot. "I got a good look at the basket. I just had to make the right decision whether to shoot the jumper or get the ball inside to Charles (Barkley). I got a good look at it and it just went in."

Jimmy Jackson missed a jumper at the buzzer for Dallas.

That wasn't the shot Dallas coach Dick Motta would have preferred. "You want to go to the hole and put it in the hands of the referee or make them play defence," said Motta.

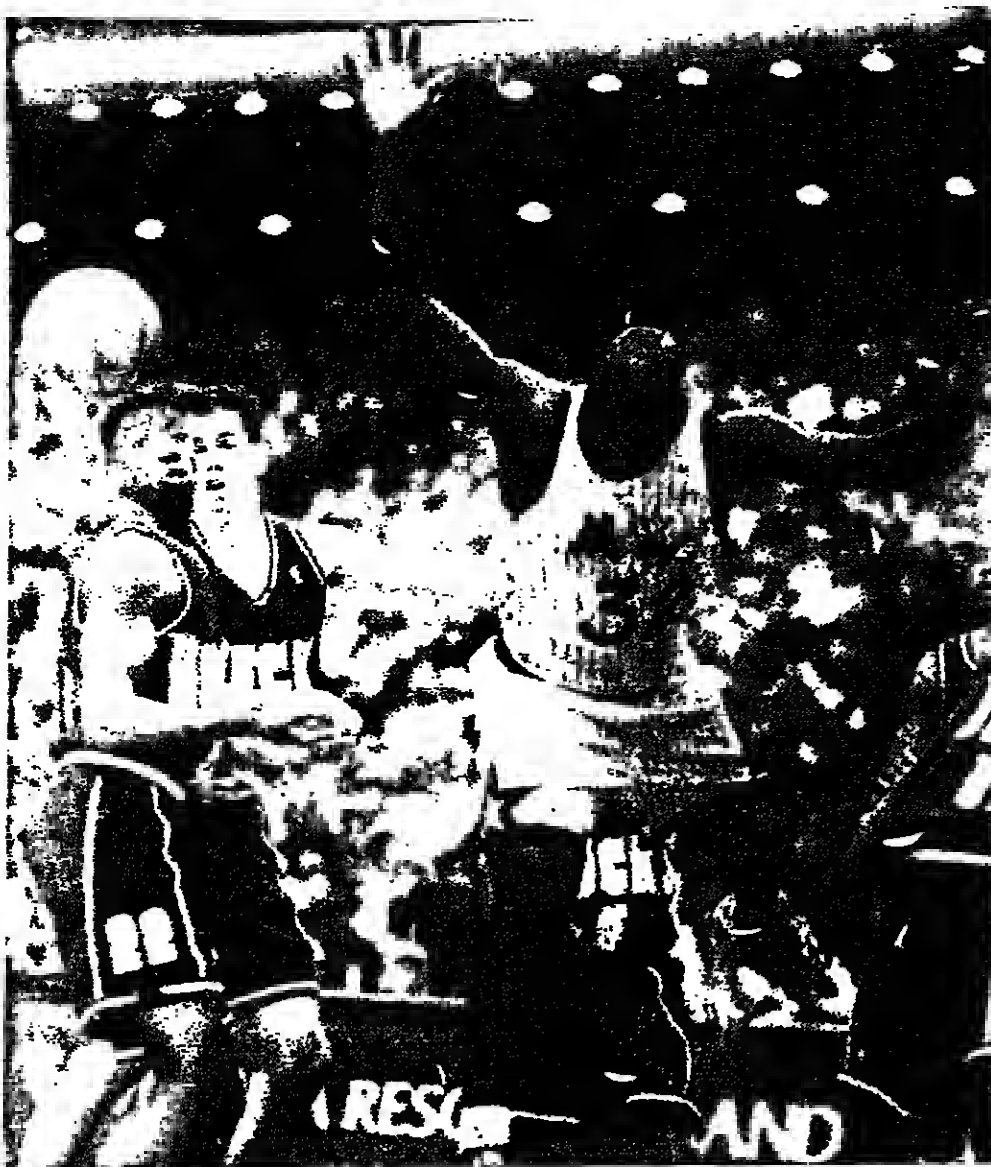
Johnson led Phoenix with 25 points and 11 assists. Barkley added 22 points and 15 rebounds for the Suns, who have won seven of eight since Johnson's return from the injured list.

Jackson scored 31 points and Jamal Mashburn had 30 for Dallas, which shot a season-high 57 per cent from the field.

Rookie Jason Kidd had 16 assists but hit just two for 10 from the field for the Mavs, who have dropped four in a row.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon had 35 points, 16 rebounds, and eight assists to lead the Rockets to a 105-93 triumph over the Atlanta Hawks, spoiling Lenny Wilkens' bid to tie the red A's coach's record for most career NBA coaching victories.

Wilkins entered the game with 937 victories over his



Orlando Magic centre Shaquille O'Neal # 32 stumbles after he was fouled by Milwaukee Bucks # 22 forward Johnny Newman (AFP photo)

RESULTS

| | | | |
|--------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Milwaukee | 98 | Detroit | 88 |
| New York | 99 | New Jersey | 91 |
| Orlando | 103 | Miami | 83 |
| LA Clippers | 95 | Chicago | 92 |
| Phoenix | 119 | Dallas | 118 |
| Houston | 105 | Atlanta | 93 |
| San Antonio | 119 | Charlotte | 108 |
| Indiana | 95 | Denver | 91 |
| Golden State | 129 | LA Lakers | 105 |
| Sacramento | 102 | Portland | 101 |

son scored 21 points as the Los Angeles Clippers scored a 95-92 victory over the Bulls.

The Clippers held the Bulls to one field goal in the final 5:42, snapping a five-game losing streak and winning at Chicago for the first time since January 1979 — 17 games and nearly 16 years.

Toni Kukoc scored 21 points and Scottie Pippen added 19 for the Bulls. Pippen was ejected late in the second quarter for arguing with referee Terry Duthart.

In Orlando, the Magic used an 18-2 fourth-quarter burst to remain unbeaten at home with a 103-83 win over the Miami Heat.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 25

points, grabbed 11 rebounds and blocked four shots, and Anfernee Hardaway added 19 points for the Magic, who improved their NBA-best record to 22-5.

At New Jersey, John Starks scored five of his 22 points during a 34-3 third-quarter run and Charles Smith added 20 in the New York Knicks' snapped a five-game losing streak, their longest in four years, with a 99-91 win over the Nets.

Starks hit 4-of-15 from the field, Patrick Ewing had 19 points and Derek Harper added 18. The Knicks were without forward Charles Oakley, who had the surgery earlier in the day.

Chris Mullins scored 21 points for New Jersey, which was playing its fifth straight game without leading scorer and rebounder Derrick Coleman (hand injury).

At Detroit, Vin Baker scored 24 points as the Milwaukee Bucks snapped a 10-game road losing streak with a 98-88 wire-to-wire victory over the Pistons.

Terry Mills had 23 points and 11 rebounds for the Pistons, who lost for the fourth straight time at home.

In An Antonio, David Robinson scored 30 points, Chuck Person had 21 and Vinny Del Negro 20 to help the Spurs win their seventh straight, 119-108 over the Charlotte Hornets.

The Spurs are 6-0 since Dennis Rodman returned from his suspension for conduct detrimental to the team.

The Hornets played the entire second half without starting centre Alonzo Mourning, who twisted an ankle. Larry Johnson had 29 points had 12 rebounds for Charlotte.

In Sacramento, Spud Webb's fadeaway jumper with two seconds remaining lifted the Kings to 102-101 triumph over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Mitch Richmond had 30 points and Olden Polynice scored 21 for the Kings.

At Golden State, Tom Gugliotta and Tim Hardaway had 20 points each to lead seven Warriors in double figures in a 129-105 rout of the Los Angeles Lakers.

Hardaway had 15 assists for the Warriors, who led all the way and have won two straight after a 10-game losing streak.

Cedric Ceballos led the Lakers with 24 points.

In Denver, Rick Smith scored a season-high 33 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 95-91 win over the Nuggets.

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf had 23 points to lead Denver,

Debut blunder hands Forest victory

LONDON (AFP)—Newly signed goalkeeper Andy Marshall made one mistake in an otherwise flawless debut performance when his poor positioning allowed Norwegian Lars Bohinen to score direct from a corner to give Nottingham Forest a 1-0 victory at the City Ground Tuesday.

Marshall was pressed into action in the opening minutes of a game that Forest dominated throughout after Bryan Gunn was stretched out with a dislocated ankle.

Apert from that one fatal error five minutes after the break when he was left flapping in no-man's land as Bohinen's corner swung in at the back post, the young keeper kept his side in the game with a string of excellent saves, including one to keep out a ferocious swerving free-kick from Stuart Pearce.

While fourth-placed Forest can travel to West Ham Saturday confident of a third victory in four games, Norwich will have to show far greater enterprise if they are to avoid a third consecutive defeat when they entertain Newcastle.

Earlier in the day Tottenham Hotspur took their unbeaten run to seven games with a 1-0 draw against London rivals Crystal Palace but gave their fans little to cheer in a largely dreary encounter that yielded only a handful of goal opportunities.

Palace, without a league goal for almost two months, battled their way to their second 90 minutes in 24 hours and earned a point that could prove vital in their fight for Premiership survival.

It was a frustrating afternoon for Tottenham, who were unable to build on Monday's 2-0 win at Norwich. But it was another game which highlighted their defensive improvement under manager Gerry Francis.

Spurs have now kept clean sheets in three successive games — a feat they



Liverpool's Robbie Fowler stretches full length to shoot whilst Leicester City goalie Kevin Poole dives to save the shot (AFP photo)



Manchester United's Nicky Butt tumbles after colliding with Chelsea's Andy Myers (left) (AFP photo)

never managed under Francis' predecessor, Ossie Ardiles.

Francis expressed his disapproval of having to play two games within 24 hours but was happy with his side's performance, saying:

"I'm just delighted that we have kept another clean sheet and kept our run going. I've been delighted with the commitment of the players."

Palace keeper Nigel Martin denied Spurs their best chance in the game when he produced a save of the highest quality to turn David Howells' shot over the bar.

But it was the visitors who might have emerged victorious when shortly before full-time Ricky Newman drilled a low shot across the Tottenham six-yard box that somehow managed to elude the

queue of Palace players

Premier League Standings

| | P | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts. |
|---------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|------|
| Blackburn | 20 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 44 | 16 | 46 |
| Manchester United | 20 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 39 | 16 | 44 |
| Newcastle | 20 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 39 | 22 | 39 |
| Nottingham Forest | 21 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 34 | 20 | 39 |
| Liverpool | 20 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 36 | 19 | 36 |
| Leeds | 20 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 29 | 25 | 32 |
| Norwich | 21 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 18 | 30 |
| Tottenham | 21 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 34 | 34 | 30 |
| Chelsea | 20 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 28 | 26 | 28 |
| Manchester City | 20 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 31 | 34 | 28 |
| Arsenal | 20 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 23 | 22 | 25 |
| Coventry | 20 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 20 | 29 | 25 |
| Wimbledon | 20 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 24 | 35 | 25 |
| Sheff Wednesday | 20 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 29 | 34 | 24 |
| Sheff Wednesday | 21 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 22 | 29 | 24 |
| Crystal Palace | 20 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 15 | 20 | 23 |
| Queens Park Rangers | 20 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 29 | 35 | 23 |
| West Ham | 20 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 16 | 22 | 22 |
| Everton | 20 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 16 | 28 | 19 |
| Aston Villa | 20 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 22 | 31 | 17 |
| Leicester | 20 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 20 | 35 | 14 |
| Ipswich | 20 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 20 | 40 | 13 |

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Senna crash hearing delayed

ROME (AFP)—Court hearings at Bologna into former world motor racing champion Ayrton Senna's death at the San Marino Grand Prix on May 1st have been postponed to January. A court official said the accident investigators had yet to complete their findings. He would not say whether anyone would be charged. The Brazilian was killed when his Williams rammed a wall at 200mph.

Search underway for French yachtswoman

SYDNEY (AFP)—Organisers of the BOC solo round the world yacht race initiated a search and rescue operation off the South Australian coast for French yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier Thursday. Organisers said that the emergency beacons on Autissier's yacht, Ecureuil Pointu Charantes II, the one-time leader of the BOC race, were triggered at 1745 AEDT (06:46 GMT). The race communications headquarters in Charleston, South Carolina, has begun emergency communication procedures, but has not made contact with the experienced French sailor. At last report, Autissier was about 920 nautical miles south-east of the South Australian coast.

Mexico enters World Cup race

ZURICH (AFP)—Mexico have made a bid to hold the 2002 World Cup, FIFA said Wednesday. Japan and South Korea had been fighting a two-horse race for the finals which FIFA president Joao Havelange has said should go to Asia. However Mexico, who hosted two successful tournaments in 1970 and 1986, might upset the running. The three countries have until Feb. 28 to confirm their bids after seeing the conditions laid down by FIFA, who will make their decision in June, 1996.

Yugoslavs make Argentina struggle

BUENOS AIRES (AFP)—Argentina, rebuilding slowly under new coach Daniel Passarella, struggled to beat Yugoslavia 1-0 in a friendly football international Tuesday. Sebastian Rambert scored a lucky 21st minute goal when fellow striker Ariel Ortega's mis-hit centre caught the Yugoslav defence unaware. But Yugoslav goalkeeper Goran Pandurovic was good enough anything Passarella's side could muster and the Yugoslavs, prompted by Dragan Stojkovic in midfield, had the better of the second half. Yugoslavia were beaten 3-0 in Brazil last week in their first international for nearly three years following the lifting of a U.N. sporting embargo.

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q1—Both vulnerable, as South

*K10 ♠K98642 ♠Q5 ♠9
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A.—Don't raise spades with a doubleton honor. North could easily have a poor fit and made bid.

*This auction. We don't mind if you jump to four spades, although that does not do justice to this bridge.

*Many minimum hands partner might have would produce a slam. If you have a sequence heart, try an exploratory bid of three diamonds to see what develops.

Q2—Neither vulnerable, as South

*K43 ♠A9 ♠Q63 ♠A64
What is your opening bid?
A.—Even if your partner has a no-trump opening bid is 1NT, this hand is much too strong. With no spade values and good five-card suit, it is worth trying 2♠, not more than 1♠. Open one diamond and jump in no-trump at your next turn.

Q3—As South, vulnerable, you

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—Your partner has the master suit and your heart is a sequence heart. You have to have half the points or more at the desk, so there is no need to do anything in this case.

Q4—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.

Q4—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—Despite the opening bid, your distribution suggests that it might be your hand, perhaps even in some "heart" no heart now. If you want your side could be shut out of the auction.

Q5—Neither vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—It is a question of whether to bid four hearts or five clubs—we would dream of setting for less than game with such a distributional holding. Since partner's talent is a double promise hearts, but not necessarily clubs, we choose at four hearts.

Q6—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.

Q7—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.

Q8—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.

Q9—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.

Q10—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.

Q11—Both vulnerable, as South

*Q732 ♠A705 ♠J87 ♠73
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ DBL ?

What do you bid now?
A.—A suit of three spades would show either a hand with slam aspirations or a more distributional hand offering a chance to see four spades and three diamonds. With your balanced hand, simply raise to three no-trump.



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New York Giants' David Meggett (left) escapes a tackle attempt from Philadelphia Eagles' Bill Romanowski in their NFL game. Giants won 16-13.

The year began and ended with Dallas

NEW YORK (AP) — The year began just like 1993, with the Dallas Cowboys beating the Buffalo Bills handily in the Super Bowl, a 31-13 victory that marked Buffalo's record fourth straight loss in the championship game of the American National Football League.

It ended with Dallas in position to become the first team ever to win three straight Super Bowls. But they were in shaky position, for this was the season of the San Francisco 49ers, who were really the only team that took advantage of the new salary cap instead of moaning about it.

In fact, the cap led to total parity except for those two teams at the top, San Francisco, which finished the regular season 13-3 and Dallas, which finished 12-4, losing two of its last three and entering the playoffs with Emmitt Smith nursing a sore hamstring.

Everyone else. For the first time ever, four teams from one division, the NFC Central, made the playoffs — Minnesota, Green Bay, Detroit and Chicago, but the Vikings won at 10-6 and the others were 9-7, a typical record in a year in which mediocrity prevailed. And the Bears and Packers edged another 9-7 team, New York Giants, in the

week. In the AFC, Pittsburgh, at 12-4, had the best record, but went into the playoffs with a less-than-formidable offense quarterbacked by Neil O'Donnell and Buffalo, the four-time Super Bowl loser, missed the playoffs and finished 7-9.

The surprise? New England, which finished 10-6 in Bill Parcells' second year, winning its final seven games and Cleveland, at 11-5. The other playoff teams were AFC East champion Miami (10-6) and San Diego (11-5) in the West with Kansas City (9-7) sneaking in as a wildcard with Joe Montana ahead of the Los Angeles Raiders (9-7) the AFC preseason favorite.

But San Francisco was dominant. Even as teams were being forced to out veterans — the most prominent being Phil Simms of the Giants — the 49ers were signing them, often giving them minimum salaries, then adding on incentives that would be counted against future caps.

Still, the Niners had to overcome the injury-caused loss of four of the five starting offensive linemen early in the season. They lost in Kansas City in their first meeting with Joe Montana on the other side of the ball, then were humbled 40-8 in a game in which coach George

Seifert lifted Steve Young in the middle of a series.

That was the turning point. Young exploded at Seifert and the 49ers never lost again, as Young had his best season and finally got on track with Jerry Rice. Sanders, who signed for \$1 million after the American Major League Baseball season was officially ended by a players strike, brought a new dimension to the defense, bringing three interceptions back for touchdowns and allowing Merion Hanks to switch from cornerback to safety, where Hanks had a Pro Bowl season.

The Niners won their next 10, averaging 36 points a game in the process, before Minnesota in a finale that was meaningless to them.

Their 21-14 victory over Dallas at Candlestick on Nov. 13 — Hanks had three interceptions — gave them the tiebreaker for home field in the playoffs, and they just about clinched it when the Cowboys lost at home to Cleveland 19-14 on Dec. 10. On a league-wide basis, rule changes and adaptations designed to increase scoring worked, although it might have been at the expense of the officiating — three seemed to be a record number of disputed calls this season.

Rice set an NFL record for touchdowns in a career in the first week of the season when

he scored three times, to bring his total to 127 in 10 seasons, one ahead of Jim Brown. Rice finished with 15 TDs for the year, giving him 13 while Young played long enough against Minnesota to complete 12 of 13, breaking Joe Montana's NFL record for quarterback rating.

Offense worked for other receivers, too. Minnesota's Cris Carter finished with 122 receptions, 10 more than the old mark of 112 by Sterling Sharpe, and Rice had 112 catches, the best of his brilliant career. Terance Mathis of Atlanta, New York jets discard, caught 111, 18 more than he had in all of his four seasons in New York.

It also was a year in which the drought of young quarterbacks seemed to be abating. While Young, Dan Marino, Joe Montana, John Elway and the rest of the over-30 gang continued to play well, some younger stars began to emerge, led by New England's Drew Bledsoe, in his second season and Green Bay's Brett Favre, in his fourth, Favre's 33 TD passes were second in the league's to Young ANF he threw just 14 interceptions.

Behind them were the likes of Craig Erickson of Tampa and Dave Brown of the Giants, who showed signs of turning into first-rate quarterbacks.

Ex-Soviet weightlifting dominance threatened

ISTANBUL (R) — War and strife plus a dire shortage of cash threaten the supremacy of the former Soviet republics who dominated the men's categories in the World Weightlifting championships.

Turkey, who finished second with a team comprising mainly of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria, were the only team in the top six who did not come from former Communist bloc nations.

But the ex-Soviet supremacy is under threat on at least two fronts.

The area is a hotbed of strife and coaches from Georgia advise journalists to speak at length to their competitors as they might not live to see another championship.

Olympic champion Kakhi Kakhiashvili left Georgia two months ago and became a late entry for Greece in the 91-kg category while the two best-known Australians, Nicu Vlad in the 180-kg category and Stefan Botev in the over-180 kgs division, are from Romania and Bulgaria respectively.

An even greater enemy for the former Communist nations could be economics.

"Under Communism sport had all the money it needed," said Bulgaria's team coach Yorgen Ivanov. "Now we have to rely on private sponsors and there is not much money to go around."

"The Bulgarian team used to train together for 11 months a year, now we are lucky if they can get together for five."

Ironically, Bulgaria were pushed into third place with a one point deficit by Turkey's overwhelmingly ex-Bulgarian squad.

The Ukrainian team, much weaker than last year's world championship squad, have found a wealthy sponsor in former super-heavyweight Anatoly Pisarenko, who set up business in the United States at the end of his sporting career.

But 108-kg champion Timur Taimazov still felt the need for his own coach and sponsor in wrestler-turned businessman Viktor Ardishev.

Jordan Soccer League Hussein, Ramtha clash today as Wihdat regain lead

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The battle for the first division soccer crown has heated up following Al Wihdat's return to the top at the end of the past week. Therefore, the upcoming matches which kick off Thursday will be decisive, especially Al Hussein's clash with Al Ramtha.

Al Ahli and Knfroum, both tied with 17 points in 6th and 7th places, will also meet Thursday. Al Wihdat will have a chance to further their lead when they play Al Jeel Friday and Al Faisali should also take advantage of their match against Al Karmel.

Meanwhile, Al Qadissieh hope to upset Al Jazireh to move out of the relegation-threatened last four, while Al Arabi need to beat Shabab Al Hussein to reach a secure halfway position.

Roundup of the 16th week of the competition

While Al Faisali's fans must surely be saddened if their team is to lose the chance to clinch the third consecutive title after the 1-1 draw with Al Ramtha, the biggest upset of the week was undoubtedly Al Hussein's surprise 2-1 defeat to 7th placed Knfroum.

Al Hussein thus moved down to second while Al Wihdat retook the lead after a 1-0 win over Shabab Al Hussein who moved down to 11th.

Al Karmel moved up to 10th after an important 2-2 draw with 5th placed Al Jazireh. However, the draw seems unlikely to be able to help the lowly team avoid relegation.

Al Arabi and Al Qadissieh remained in 8th and 9th places after a goalless draw, while Al Ahli main-

tained 6th place after a 2-0 win over last-placed Al Jeel.

Al Wihdat vs. Shabab Al Hussein: Jihad Abdul Mun'em stunned Shabab Al Hussein early in the match when he netted the match's sole goal from a header in the 4th minute.

Shabab Al Hussein put up a big effort to equalise and managed to hold off the former champions' attacks.

Knfroum vs. Hussein: Knfroum's win was very important as they tied with Al Ahli and further improved their record as the only newcomers not threatened by relegation.

Munih Gharaibeh scored Al Hussein's only goal from a header in the 33rd minute. Knfroum's top striker, Yousef Obeidat equalised in the 49th minute and added the winning goal in the 75th minute.

Faisali vs. Ramtha: The titleholders again lost a chance to improve their standing and seem to be letting the third consecutive title slip away.

Al Ramtha were not hurt much after the 1-1 draw. Striker Mouaffaq Abu Hdeih scored Al Ramtha's goal from a penalty kick in the 19th minute. Al Faisali's ace Jiryes Tadros

assisted Suhbi Suleiman in equalising in the 53rd minute. Tadros, Firas Al Khalileh lost definite scoring chances.

Jazireh vs. Karmel: The 2-2 draw finally moved Al Karmel to 10th place after languishing in 11th for a long time.

Al Jazireh scored first by Maher Mafarjeh in the 32nd minute. Al Karmel equalised by Nizar Shamekh in the 44th minute and took the lead in the 80th minute by Naser Hussein's header. Al Jazireh's Mafarjeh saved his team from defeat when he equalised in the 86th minute.

Ahli vs. Jeel: Al Ahli took an important step towards maintaining a half-way standing when they defeated last-placed Al Jeel 2-0.

Striker Husam Hammash opened scoring early when he stunned Al Jeel in the 2nd minute. The second goal was scored by Amer Wali in the 84th minute.

Arabi vs. Qadissieh: Both teams are near the relegation zone and need to improve their record to avoid that prospect. Their goalless draw enabled them to maintain their standings going into the 17th week.

Standings after 16th week

| | P | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts. |
|-------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|------|
| Wihdat | 16 | 11 | 5 | — | 18 | 3 | 27 |
| Hussein | 16 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 42 | 16 | 26 |
| Ramtha | 16 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 33 | 10 | 25 |
| Faisali | 16 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 25 | 9 | 21 |
| Jazireh | 16 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 18 | 18 |
| Ahli | 16 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 22 | 20 | 17 |
| Knfroum | 16 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 27 | 27 | 17 |
| Arabi | 16 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 18 | 26 | 14 |
| Qadissieh | 16 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 22 | 13 |
| Karmel | 16 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 12 | 38 | 6 |
| Shabab Al Hussein | 16 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 17 | 37 | 5 |
| Jeel | 16 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 10 | 37 | 3 |

Benetton rule out signing Mansell

ROME (R) — Former formula one world champion Nigel Mansell will not be joining Benetton next season.

"We will name our drivers for next season at the end of January but Nigel Mansell will not be one of them," team president Alessandro Benetton told the Gazzetta dello Sport in an interview published Wednesday.

Benetton said Briton Johnny Herbert was almost certain to partner world champion Michael Schumacher in

his team in the coming season. He said it would be too

expensive to hire a driver of Mansell's calibre alongside Schumacher.

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Baseball owners, players file charges

NEW YORK (R) — Major League Baseball owners and players filed unfair labour practice complaints against each other Tuesday in the latest round of the dispute that stopped the 1994 season early and threatens the 1995 season as well.

The players are seeking a preliminary injunction to prevent the implementation of the owners' salary cap, claiming the owners did not bargain in good faith. The owners claim the union violated federal labour law by negotiating in bad faith.

The owners' player relations committee and the Major League Baseball Players Association filed their complaints with the National Labour Relations Board (NLRB) in New York. Club owners officially declared an impasse in the baseball negotiations and implemented their salary cap as of 12:01 a.m. last Friday.

The players went on strike last August 12 as negotiations over a new contract with the league foundered on the salary cap issue, and the owners cancelled the rest of the season — along with the playoffs and World Series — September 14.

In its complaint, the owners charged that the union "refused to negotiate wages on a collective basis, unlawfully insisted on the individual negotiation of wages and salary arbitration, engaged in surface bargaining and otherwise evidenced bad faith in the exercise of its collective bargaining obligations."

The union alleged that the owners never intended to sign a contract and were always intent on establishing a salary cap.

"We have been advised by the board that the case will be given prompt consideration," union head Donald Fehr said in a prepared statement. "From the beginning, the clubs have had one and only one thought in mind, forcing

... we are confident that board will come to see that the clubs entered into negotiations with no intention of reaching an agreement."

NIRO New York regional director Daniel Silverman said in a statement: "We are, of course, mindful of the great public interest in the resolution of this dispute."

"It should be emphasised

to the public that our role is to protect the collective bargaining process but not to require any party to agree to a proposal or to require them to make a concession. This dispute must be settled by the parties themselves."

"We will begin the investigation immediately and will make a recommendation to the general counsel as soon as

possible."

He said most cases are investigated within four to six weeks.

Time is drawing short to save the 1995 season since the players have said they will remain on strike while challenging the owners' action in the courts.

The owners plan to open training camps and start the

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Jordan yet to receive Israeli nomination of ambassador

Bentsur rejects reports of Jordan voicing disappointment over Israeli attitude

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian government has not received any official nomination of an Israeli ambassador to Jordan and Amman believes that the Israeli government has not reached a final decision on the issue, official sources said Wednesday.

The sources, requesting anonymity, were commenting on an Israeli newspaper report that Jordan had made its "displeasure" known to Israel over the planned nomination of Ephraim Halevy, deputy head of the Mossad secret service, as Israeli ambassador to the Kingdom.

"How could the government make a comment on a nomination which has not been received?" said one source. "Jordan would make its views known as and when it receives an official nomination through the proper channels."

Following the peace treaty signed on Oct. 26, Jordan and Israel opened embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman respectively on Dec. 11. Both missions are headed at charge d'affaires level and operate out of hotels pending suitable alternate premises.

Jordan has named Marwan Muasher, former spokesman of the peace negotiating team with Israel, as its ambassador to the Jewish state. But Dr. Muasher is not expected to assume the post until Israel

completes its process of naming an ambassador and securing Jordanian approval of the nomination.

Several names, including those of outgoing Chief of Staff Ehud Barak and foreign ministry official Yossi Gal, have been floating in the Israeli press as possible nominees to take up the first Israeli ambassadorship to Jordan.

Israeli reports said last month that Gen. Barak, who leaves office in the new year, had turned down the appointment. However, it was never confirmed that Gen. Barak was indeed considered for the post. In any event, that left Mr. Halevy and Mr. Gal in the field, at least officially.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was reported to be supporting Mr. Halevy for the post while Foreign Minister Shimon Peres backed career diplomat Gal, who, for some time, served as Dr. Muasher's counterpart during the peace negotiations.

Jordan's reported displeasure over the planned Halevy nomination, according to the Haaretz newspaper, stemmed from the fact that he headed the Mossad, an establishment known for its clandestine activities and role in assassination of leading Palestinian figures.

Mr. Halevy's ambassadorship in Amman would only "feed anti-Israeli sentiments" in Jordan, Haaretz said Tuesday.

The newspaper did not

make clear when and how Jordan had conveyed its "displeasure" to Israel, but it implied that it came during a meeting between Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Israeli foreign ministry deputy director-general Eytan Bentsur, who visited Amman on Sunday.

Haaretz said Dr. Majali told Mr. Bentsur that Jordanians were complaining that they were not seeing the fruits of peace. As an example, Dr. Majali was reported to have told Mr. Bentsur that many firms that expected increased business with Israelis coming to Jordan since the peace treaty were seeing the visitors spending little, if any at all, money in Jordan.

Four operators confirmed the complaints. "Israelis bring their own food when they come to Jordan," said one tour operator. "It is strange though," he added, "that food from store shelves cost less in Jordan than across the border."

The Jerusalem Post reported: Reports of Jordanian government disaffection with the consequences of the peace treaty with Israel are "inaccurate," Mr. Bentsur said Tuesday.

Several newspapers reported that during the meeting between Bentsur and Jordanian Prime Minister Majali, Dr. Majali had said Jordan was "extremely disappointed" with the Israeli

(Continued on page 7)

Beirut bombing suspect said to be Israeli agent

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese authorities named the main suspect in last week's car bomb which killed three people, in Beirut and said he worked for the Israeli intelligence service Mossad, state-run television said on Wednesday.

Tele Lhnan, quoting an army statement, said Ahmad Hallaq was the main suspect in the Dec. 21 blast in the Beirut bastion of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) group, which is fighting Israeli troops in South Lebanon.

The statement said Mr. Hallaq, recruited in July 1993 by a Mossad officer named Dani "who is active in Cyprus," had set off by remote control the car bomb which killed two Hizbollah members and a civilian and wounded 11 people.

One of the dead, Fuad Moughniyyeh, was the brother of Lebanon's most wanted hostage-taker of the 1980s, Imad Moughniyyeh. Lebanese officials and Hizbollah accused Israel of being behind the blast.

Lebanon's interior minister said earlier on Wednesday that Lebanese authorities had arrested several people suspected of involvement in the bombing.

"The main leads into the

southern suburb bombing have been uncovered and some suspects have been arrested," Interior Minister Michel Al Murri told reporters in Beirut.

"The investigation is progressing quickly and its results will be revealed in the coming few days," Mr. Murri added. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said the answer to who was behind the car bomb rested not with him but in Lebanon.

Judicial sources confirmed a report by the Beirut daily Al Safir on Wednesday that among those arrested in connection with the bombing was the wife of the ring leader and that he works for Mossad.

"Yes, the newspaper report is accurate. The main suspect works for Mossad and he remains at large but his wife has been arrested," one source told Reuters.

Al Safir, quoting "well-informed official sources," said some ring members had planned the Beirut bombing at a meeting with a top Mossad officer in Cyprus.

"The suspects' confessions... revealed that Mossad was involved 100 per cent (in the bombing) from the beginning to the end," the paper reported.

Syria insists on reciprocal arrangements with Israel

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Damascus insisted Wednesday that Israeli-Syrian security arrangements should be balanced after an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, rejecting the Jewish state's latest security demands.

"It is necessary to arrange for reciprocal and balanced security measures on both sides of the Golan line after a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and South Lebanon," the government newspaper Tishrin said.

The Syrian-Israeli talks are stalled over the scope and timing of an Israeli withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights, seized in the 1967 Middle East war, and over the type of peaceful relations to be established.

Syria also says it will not sign a peace deal unless Israel withdraws from its self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

"Israeli security demands are completely rejected. Syria cannot be dragged into discussing security fears which Israel is using as a pretext to cover up expansionist aims," Tishrin said. Syria Sunday announced its rejection of an Israeli demand to keep observation

troop withdrawal. Israeli and Syrian military officials held talks in Washington Thursday and Friday to pave the way for a resumption of formal negotiations suspended since the Feb. 25 Hebron mosque massacre.

Tishrin said that "in the age of missiles, sophisticated weapons and advanced planes, security and geographical hindrances have no value."

"Peace would be worthless if the Golan were not returned to its homeland, if its children did not go back home, if the Israeli settlements were not dismantled and the settlers did not leave the Golan."

Nearly 14,000 Israelis live in 32 settlements on the Golan, which was "annexed" in 1981.

"Syria fights with honour when war is imposed, and makes peace with honour when it is offered a just and comprehensive peace," Tishrin said.

According to Yossi Olmert, a researcher at Israel's Hebrew University who said he had contacted Syrian experts, Israel has concluded that "it will not reach peace with Syria with-

Israel to return last antiquities to Egypt

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said on Wednesday it was handing back to Egypt some 600 cartons full of antiquities, the last of the finds it promised to return from Israel's 15-year occupation of the Sinai peninsula.

Amir Drori, head of the Israel antiquities authority, said the finds would be shipped to Egypt on Thursday. The agreement to return the antiquities was reached in January 1993 after years of negotiation following the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty.

The authority said Israel was handing back the artefacts in accordance with the 1954 Hague convention on returning archaeological finds to their country of origin.

"We are told this is the first time a state has given so many artefacts to another country," Mr. Drori told a joint news conference with an Egyptian delegation that arrived to receive the antiquities. "This can be a precedent for other countries."

The head of the Egyptian supreme archaeological council, Mohammed Abdul Halim Nouredin, said Egypt was trying to retrieve Egyptian antiquities from other countries that excavated and removed them from Egypt over the years.

"We are trying to contact other countries to get back artefacts," Mr. Nouredin said. "So far we have not had good reactions from these countries."

Israeli archaeologists uncovered the artefacts, including pottery, flint objects, textiles, shell and ceramic jewellery and hundreds of coins, during the 1967-82 Israeli occupation of Sinai, the desert peninsula linking Africa and Asia which lay on the crossroads of many ancient civilisations.

The Israeli authority officially applied to the Egyptian authorities to lend Israel 24 objects containing Hebrew inscriptions. These include third-century Byzantine ceramic oil lamps with Jewish candelabra — menorah — imprints.

Mr. Nouredin said the objects would first be exhibited to the Egyptian public at museums, but did not rule out an eventual loan.

"I can understand it is emotionally important to you to keep the menorahs, but that's not how it goes," Mr. Nouredin said. "We never loaned anything long-term to another country, but we are ready to consider."

The Egyptian delegates stressed their readiness for



PALESTINIAN PROTEST: A Palestinian woman shows her resignation as an Israeli worker walks away with uprooted olive trees planted Monday on a hillside south of Bethlehem on the West Bank, where villagers from El Khader and Israeli Peace Now activists tried to prevent Israeli settlers from starting construction to enlarge the

Jewish settlement of Ephraim. Palestinians say that the land belongs to them for generations, while settlers insist that the land is owned by the Israeli state. Five people were injured and 45 arrested on Tuesday as security forces dispersed hundreds of protesters from the site (see related story on page 2) (AFP photo)

Pope condemns Algeria killings, calls for dialogue

VATICAN CITY (Agencies)

— Pope John Paul condemned the killing of four Roman Catholic priests in Algeria as an act of barbarity on Wednesday and called for dialogue between the military-backed government and Islamic fundamentalists.

"I pray to God that the sacrifice of the four priests will be a seed of reconciliation and peace and will induce everyone to opt for dialogue and mutual understanding, without which there is no future for a truly human society," the Pope said.

He told pilgrims at his weekly general audience that "the barbaric assassination" of the clerics, three Frenchmen and a Belgian, had brought sadness to Christians.

He said he was close to the small Catholic community in Algeria, which he called a "martyred country."

The four priests, members of the order of the White Fathers, were shot dead on Tuesday in their residence in Tizi-Ouzou, 110 kilometres east of the capital Algiers.

The official Algerian news agency APS has blamed Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas for the killings, carried out less than 24 hours after French commandos killed four Algerian guerrillas who

hijacked an Air France airliner.

The latest deaths brought to eight the number of priests and nuns among the "foreigners killed in Algeria since the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) ordered all foreigners more than year ago to leave the country or face death."

Algeria has been informed since the government called off a "1995 general elections" which fundamentalists were poised to win. About 20,000 Algerians have since fled in the civil strife.

The White Fathers named the French priests as Jean-Marie Chevillard, 65, Alain Deschamps, 75, and Christian Chevillard, 36. The order said the Belgian was Charles Deckers, said 70.

It said they were shot to death by an armed band that broke into the priests' house.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the killings.

Algerian press reports said the six gunmen who killed the clerics probably intended to kidnap them. Four of the attackers, armed with Kalashnikovs and carrying walkie-talkies, dressed up as policemen in order to get into the presbytery in a quiet area of Tizi Ouzou, witnesses cited in the Algerian press said.

The suggestion that the

mutants intended to kidnap

the priests was backed by reports that two accomplices were waiting outside the mission in a van intended to be used in the abduction, reports said Wednesday.

After locking up the mission's employees and the group of supplicants, the killers burst into the office of Chevillard and ordered him to follow to the police station.

Realising that it was a trap, Chevillard started shouting, was pulled out into a courtyard and shot dead. His three fellow missionaries were shot as they were trying to escape.

The Algerian press meanwhile led its coverage Wednesday with attacks on French criticism of the Algerian government and doubts over the French handling of the plane hijacking.

The pro-government daily L'Audience suggested that France might in some way have manipulated the hijacking for its own political purposes.

There were several "shadowy aspects" to the affair which suggested that the seizure of the aircraft, its flight to France and the final seizure by French forces was not just "a simple hijacking," the paper said.

Israelis rocket Lebanese house

BRAACHIT, Lebanon (R)

— An Israeli helicopter gunship rocketed a house in a South Lebanon village, wounding two young boys, witnesses said on Wednesday.

Villagers told a Reuters reporter that two rockets fired by the helicopter hit the house of a local official of the Shiite Muslim Amal movement in Braachit village north of Israel's occupation zone in South Lebanon.

Two unexploded rockets were dismantled by U.N. peacekeepers.

It was the 31st Israeli air raid into Lebanon this year. Amal said the attack on the official's house took place just before midnight after its fighters attacked Israel's South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia allies on the edge of the zone. No casualties were reported to the attacks.

Security sources said Amal guerrillas fired Katyusha rockets, mortar bombs and machineguns at three SLA posts.

Israeli and SLA artillery and tanks opened up on Braachit, nearby Shaqra village and surrounding hills, they said. Five houses in Braachit were damaged in the retaliatory shelling.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bazargan to seek medical treatment abroad

TEHRAN (AFP) — Former Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan is to travel abroad shortly for medical treatment, his relatives said Wednesday. Mr. Bazargan, 68, has been suffering from heart problems since early Dec. and his physicians have ruled out an operation for him in Iran because of his advanced age. Mr. Bazargan, who heads the opposition Freedom Movement Party (FMP), might visit the United States, the sources said. The FMP, a moderate Islamic movement founded in 1961, is among the few opposition groups tolerated in Iran. Mr. Bazargan headed the first provisional government after the 1979 Islamic revolution, but he was ousted for espousing liberal ideas.

Kurds say factional fighting is almost over

ANKARA (R) — Two rival Kurdish guerrilla groups in northern Iraq have agreed to a ceasefire and almost ended more than a week of factional fighting, an Iraqi Kurdish spokesman said on Wednesday. Shazad Saib, the Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said the agreement, between his faction and the opposing Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), was reached on Tuesday in the city of Erbil. "There are only isolated cases of fighting left. It was never that serious anyway," he told Reuters. Iraqi official newspapers said on Wednesday more than 200 people had died in the clashes and that the residents of Erbil had fled. The Al Jumhuriya daily described the summer resort of Salahuddin in the Erbil area as "a city of ghosts." Mr. Saib said Salahuddin was free from fighting but that opposing groups of guerrillas had clashed on Tuesday near two towns on the road to Erbil. "There was fighting around Mulla Omar and Bahriha," he said. Mr. Saib could give no casualty figures.

Robbers kill German woman in Libya

BONN (R) — A German woman was killed and her male companion injured in an apparent armed robbery in Libya, the German foreign ministry said on Wednesday. A ministry spokesman said the attack on the two Germans took place on Dec. 22 in northern Libya. "It was probably an armed robbery," he told reporters. The ministry issued a formal warning to Germans earlier this year to be on their guard in Libya after a growing number of robberies. The spokesman did not identify the victims of the attack.

Iran finds remains of 100 soldiers

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has found the remains of 100 of its soldiers and militiamen killed in the 1980-1988 war against Iraq, the official news agency IRNA reported Wednesday. The corpses were discovered in the Mehriz region of Ilam province neighbouring Iraq, it said. About 50 of them have yet to be identified. Since 1988, Iran has found the remains of around 3,000 of its soldiers and militiamen as well as 2,500 Iraqi troops killed during the war, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Tehran says as many as 32,000 Iranians were killed.

Romania police seek Moldovan in killing

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanian police said on Wednesday they had issued a warrant for the arrest of a 23-year-old Moldovan for the killing of an Iranian, run through with a sword in Bucharest last month. Police said Andrei Costas was being sought for the murder of Mohammad Ali Assadi, an Iranian resident in Romania. "We have a warrant issued for Costas's arrest but he has disappeared. But we hope to get to him soon," Bucharest police spokesman Dan Secneru told Reuters. Assadi, described by Romanian newspapers as a political refugee but by Iranian diplomats as a common criminal, was killed with a "ninja" sword at his Bucharest home last month in what police concluded was a gang-related feud.

Lebanon bans New Year shooting

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Lebanese Defence Ministry has suspended all firearms licences during the holiday season and warned revellers against shooting in the air to celebrate the New Year. Defence Minister Mohsen Dallul's decision, announced on Wednesday, renders licences null and void until 8:00 a.m. on Jan. 1. Only bodyguards of political figures, officials, clerics and diplomats are exempted. The ministry warned it would take severe action against anyone violating the ban. Several people were arrested last year when they defied a similar decision and fired off guns during the holidays. Before and during the 1975-1990 civil war, it was common practise across Lebanon for people to fire guns to mark the birth of a child, a wedding, a baptism, or a death. Rocket-propelled grenades were also used.

Palestinian leaders hold talks in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Hardline Palestinian leaders said Tuesday they had met with senior Iraqi officials to discuss how to torpedo the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accords. Two leaders from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Abu Ali Mustafa and Abdul Rahim Mallouh, held talks with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. Mr. Mustafa told AFP. The talks focused on "ways to make the accords fail" and "ways to unite Palestinians and national Arab forces to foil American and Israeli plots in the region," said Mr. Mustafa, second in command of the Damascus-based PFLP.

Two killed in clashes in Egypt

ASSIUT (R) — Suspected Muslim militants killed one policeman and wounded another when they opened fire on them on a train in southern Egypt, security sources said on Wednesday. They said the shooting took place on Tuesday and the gunman, who stole one policeman's rifle, escaped when the train stopped at Farshut station in the southern province of Ocha. The dead policeman was a member of the

COLUMN 8

George Burns cancels birthday appearance

NEW YORK (R) — George Burns, the 98-year-old Oscar-winning comedian, has cancelled his annual appearance at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas but the venue is taking reservations for his 100th birthday gig, an operator said Wednesday. "He's cancelled. But we're taking reservations for 1995," said a Caesars Palace switchboard operator. "He's scheduled to play here from Jan. 18 through Jan. 22, 1995, though that could be changed. We're taking reservations right now," said the operator. The operator said she had no further information on Burns' condition but a hospital spokesman in Los Angeles said Burns was recovering from surgery. The comedian was discharged in September from Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in Los Angeles after surgery to drain excess fluid from the surface of his brain. The fluid buildup was caused by a head injury suffered when he fell in his bathtub at his Beverly Hills home. "He hasn't worked for a while. He had surgery several months ago. I imagine they cancelled because he's not yet ready to do it," said Ron Wise, a spokesman for Cedars-Sinai. Burns has continued to play show dates through his 90s and had also been booked to star at the London Palladium on his 100th birthday in 1996. In his 80s Burns became a film star, won an Oscar, resurrected his fading stage career, became an author and went on to make hit records. He won the 1975 best supporting actor Oscar for his performance as a retired comedian in the film version of Neil Simon's The Sunshine Boys and his career soared. At age 95, he became the oldest-ever Grammy Award nominee, with a nod in the spoken-word category for Grace — A Love Story.

Study: women with AIDS die sooner than men

CHICAGO (R) — Women suffering from AIDS have shorter survival rates than men and are particularly susceptible to pneumonia, a prime killer of infected victims, a study published Tuesday said. The increased risk of AIDS-related pneumonia among women may be due to their having poorer access to health care, lower socioeconomic status and less social support than infected men, the researchers said. The University of Minneapolis study, which followed over a 15-month interval 768 women and 3,779 men from 17 health centres around the United States, found the deadly disease progress at similar rates in men and women from the time of initial infection with the virus. "Compared with men, HIV-infected women in the (study) were at increased risk of death, but not disease progression," author Sandra Melnick wrote in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The study found that women with AIDS were 1.33 times more at risk of dying than men with the disease and 1.38 times more likely to develop bacterial pneumonia. Women with a history of intravenous drug use, for whom shared needles can spread the infection, were at a substantially greater risk than similarly infected men of contracting the deadly pneumonia. But infected women were at about the same risk as men in having the disease progress and weaken their immune systems. Women were also found to be much less at risk than men of developing Kaposi's sarcoma, a common cancer among AIDS victims.

Spain to spend \$150 million on Prado renovation

MADRID (AFP) — The Spanish government Tuesday announced it was budgeting 20 billion pesetas (\$150 million) for renovation of the Prado Museum. An international jury will select the best project for modernizing and enlarging the museum, known for its Velazquez paintings, and which welcomes 1.5 million visitors each year, Culture Minister Carmelo Gonzalez said. The